



Creating Healthy Schools and Communities in Broome County



Creating Community Walking Paths at Windsor Central School District

Walking Paths in a Rural Community

The Broome County Health Department's Creating Healthy Schools and Communities team has partnered with Windsor Central School District to establish walking paths at Windsor High School. The walking paths will provide opportunities for safe, accessible physical activity for individuals of all ages and abilities.

Limited Access to Safe Walking and Biking Paths in Windsor

The Town of Windsor is a rural community located in Broome County, NY. Windsor High School's campus, which is where the District Offices are located, is located on a busy state road, and often serves as a hub for the school community. Due to the location of the campus, options for walking and biking have been limited. Since the town is in a rural setting, it is challenging for many community members to find safe locations to walk, as there are a limited number of roads with sidewalks.

Windsor School District has always kept the health of both staff and students in mind. During Year 1 of the CHSC grant, Windsor CSD worked with the Broome County Health Department (BCHD) and Broome-Tioga BOCES to assess and strengthen the existing School Local Wellness Policy. After making changes to the Local Wellness Policy, the district realized that opportunities for physical activity during the school day could be expanded upon, both for staff and students. Since the district values the health of their school community, they used this as an opportunity to look at various ways



One of several signs detailing each walking path on Windsor High School's campus. The signs display a map and the distance of each trail, as well as indicators for each trailhead. The custom signs were paid for using CHSC funds via the Broome County Health Department.

that physical activity could be offered before, during, and after the school day.

Utilizing Existing Resources

Windsor High School, which sits on 80 acres and is surrounded by woods and streams, had existing trails that were underutilized and in need of updating. School officials determined that renovating the existing trails into functional walking paths would offer opportunities for students, staff, and members of the community to enjoy being physically active without having to travel far to do so.

The Broome County Health Department's CHSC team worked closely with Windsor district officials to outline a plan for this project. Personnel from Windsor CSD assessed the status of each section of the trail, noting what changes would need to be made to make them safe and functional for exercise. Next, staff members meticulously measured the distance of each trail, which was necessary as this would be indicated on the signs for the trails. As the renovations were underway, district officials worked with BCHD to design and

CHSC | Success Story

finalize custom signage. Ultimately, the project resulted in three new trails, each of varying length and difficulty. One of the paths exits onto a main road, making it easily accessible for community members.

Once the walking paths were completed, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held, with several local media outlets in attendance. It was important to have media coverage for this project, as it served to notify the public that these resources are available to all community members. The news segment was shown on multiple news programs and was featured on various social media platforms which helped to advertise this new community resource.

“Whether you’re talking about physical health or mental health, this is a great opportunity for our students, staff, and community members to become healthier members of the community in all ways,” Dr. Jason Andrews, Windsor CSD Superintendent

Long-Term Health Benefits for the Community

Although the walking paths were completed close to the end of the school year, staff and students have already started enjoying being physically active on the paths. For high school staff and students, it is easy to take a quick break and go for a stroll while enjoying both the benefits of physical activity and being outdoors.

Due to the media coverage, many community members have expressed appreciation for and interest in using the walking trails. The district and the Broome CHSC team has heard feedback from community members who are pleased with having an opportunity for safe physical activity in such an easily accessible location.

Monitoring and Expansion of the Windsor Walking Paths

During Year 3 of the CHSC grant, the Broome County CHSC team will continue to work with Windsor CSD to promote the walking paths for use by all members of the community. There will also be a focus on monitoring how frequently the paths are being utilized, and if any improvements can be made. Eventually, the district hopes to expand the walking paths, including longer trails of varying difficulties. The team will also work with the district on ideas for expanding accessibility options for the paths, with the eventual goal of making them fully available to people of all ages and abilities.

To learn more about our work:

Email: Aimee.Chaluisant@BroomeCountyNY.gov

View: [News Coverage for Walking Path](#)



Success Story

A Cycle of Opportunity: How Bike Racks and Self-Repair Stations are Connecting Communities to Resources

Capital Roots partnered with Mechanicville Area Community Services Center to encourage active transportation to and from their location by installing bicycle racks and bike fix-it stations.

It's Time to Shift Gears

In a society built for automobiles rather than people, increasing access to equitable resources in the community is essential. The Mechanicville Area Community Services Center (MACSC) is a non-profit organization that provides many methods of assistance to the people of Mechanicville, including food programs, domestic violence advocacy, school age child care, and youth development among others. However, owning a vehicle and all of the associated costs are expensive – and many of the people who need these services don't have one.

How do we make sure that we are expanding this access to all members of the community who need it, and not just the ones that can afford to drive there? Not only does this rule out families of low socioeconomic status, but it also disempowers the children and teens that would make an effort to seek help themselves if they are not old enough or are too under resourced to seek help.

Capital Roots and MACSC decided that it was time to do something: to make sure that accessing community resources does not operate on a pay-



Image Description: Two bicycle racks installed outside the Mechanicville Area Community Services Center.

Photo Credit: Capital Roots

to-play model, nor does it unintentionally exclude those in need.

Let's Roll

The first step of the project was the installation of bike racks outside of the community center. Capital Roots provided the funding for this investment from the *Creating Healthy Schools and Communities* grant from the New York State Department of Health.

CHSC | Success Story

The racks were installed in a visible location near the entrance to MACSC's building, making it easy for people to find and use them.

The second step of the project was the installation of a bike fix-it station. This all-in-one bicycle repair station contains an air pump for reflatting tires, a plethora of hand tools to cover just about any minor repair a bicycle might need, and even has a QR code posted on it that when scanned brings the user to directions on common bike fixes that are possible with the resources provided. The station was installed near the bike racks, making it easy for people to use.

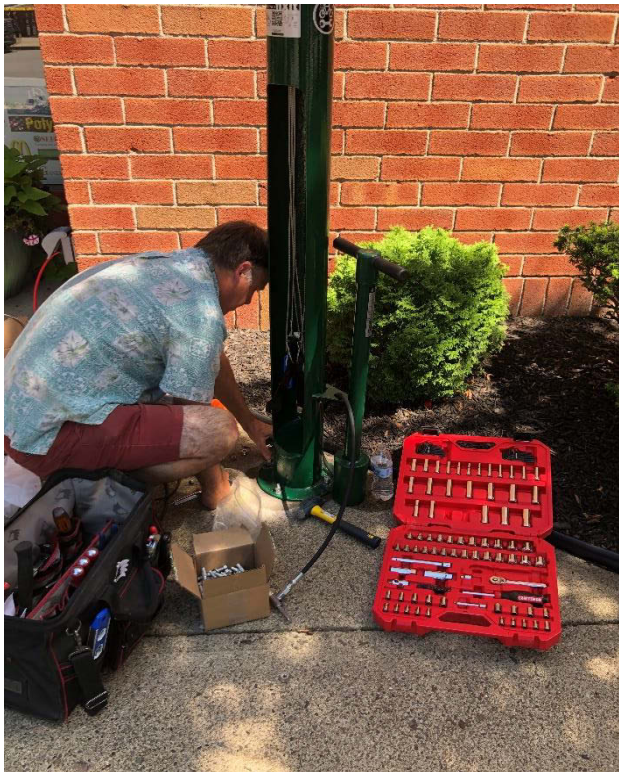


Image Description: Bike Fix-It station installed outside the Mechanicville Area Community Services Center.

Biking Builds Impact

Already, the project has had a positive impact on the community: the bike racks and fix-it station have made it easier for people to bike to the Community Services Center, which has also encouraged people to use the resources that MACSC has available. These have been well-

received by the community so far, and both Capital Roots and MACSC hope that it will have an even greater impact as they are there for even more time.

Additionally, MACSC reported that even just after the installation, the bike racks were frequently used, particularly by children and teens in the community. Not only does this reach our goal of increasing access to community services, but also that we have empowered children and teens not old enough to drive to access these services themselves.

Moving Forward

Now that the initial number of bike racks and fix-it stations are in place, Capital Roots is building momentum and taking off: Capital Roots is in talks with the Mechanicville Area Community Services Center to install more bike racks in other areas of the community. Additionally, Capital Roots is in talks to create a Bike Rodeo event with MACSC in order to encourage more bicycling throughout the community itself. Talk about putting the pedal to the metal!

To learn more about our work:

Visit: www.capitalroots.org

Email: healthycommmanager@capitalroots.org





Success Story

Cornell Builds Strong Bonds to the Outdoors

“I have always been in awe of Cornell’s programs and the resources they offer to Sullivan County. When the opportunity arose to work with Cornell Cooperative Extension Sullivan County Creating Healthy Schools & Communities (CHSC) I knew it was something we couldn’t pass up. Together, we were able to make strides in offering year-round, open-air activities to Valley Daycare students, expand our luncheon options, and enhance the outdoor experiences of students of all ages.” ~Nicole Newick, Valley Daycare

Winters in New York can be harsh and overwhelming with deep snow and freezing temperatures, making it difficult to keep students active. Classroom brain breaks and yoga classes don’t burn the same energy as a good hike or time spent climbing playground equipment. Finding ways to keep kids outside, year-round, has been a goal of Valley Daycare.

To fight back against winter boredom, Cornell funded a collection of children’s snowshoes purchased from a local small business, Morgan Outdoors, who gave staff and children a hands-on tutorial on the snowshoes’ proper use and care. Being able to hit snow-covered trails in ‘bear feet’ is a memory I don’t think students will soon forget.



Photo Valley Daycare

When they have more to battle than snow, they can adventure to their indoor/outdoor hoop house, a privately purchased, 30x50 hoop building complete with Astro turf flooring. CHSC supplied balls, hula hoops, obstacle course materials plus storage to make sure the indoor/outdoor gross motor space is an excitement-filled arena.

Next to the hoop building is the new luncheon area. With assistance from both Cornell and Sullivan Renaissance, they now have a well-used collection of commercial and ADA-accessible picnic tables that double as outdoor classroom space. The area also supports a Ninja Warrior playground to build muscle and confidence and a reading gazebo, constructed by a local Sullivan County company, 1TIME GC.

Not only can students enjoy eating outdoors, but they can enjoy eating what they grow. A grow station and funding towards garden enhancement has given them the ability to grow some of their own foods. Created to be a substantial size, one can walk 10 loops around the edible garden to reach 1 mile. While still in the early stages, they are on the path to growing a supply of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Additionally, Sullivan County Childcare Council gifted them a four-child stroller to help transport the littlest learners outdoors to enjoy the view. They look forward to using these enhanced spaces to offer family and community events all year long. New programs are in the works to increase utilization of spaces and create new funding streams to support the areas.

They have even added an additional role at Valley Daycare, Garden Coordinator, who will take over the planning and funding seeking to continue to expand and maintain the edible gardens and help realize their goals for a self-sufficient stream of fresh and healthy snacks.



Valley Daycare
Ninja Warrior Playground

To learn more about our work:

Visit: sullivanccce.org

Email: sullivan@cornell.edu

Building and Sharing Food Pantry Best Practices in Chautauqua County

As part of the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) grant awarded by the New York State Department of Health, Chautauqua Health Network has partnered with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chautauqua County to connect food pantries across the region.

Food Insecurity in Chautauqua County

The most recent Chautauqua County Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan for 2022-2024 revealed that several areas of the County are classified as ‘food deserts.’ A food desert refers to an area where the nearest supermarket is more than one mile away in urban settings, or more than ten miles away in rural settings. Food deserts in Chautauqua County include areas in the southwest portion including Clymer, French Creek, and Sherman; the northern part including Town of Dunkirk, Pomfret, Stockton and areas of the City of Dunkirk and portions of the southeast quadrant including the City of Jamestown.

Food deserts make it difficult for community residents to obtain healthy foods. Food pantries are often essential lifelines to support individuals living in food deserts or who may be having difficulty accessing food due to socioeconomic hardships. Food pantries can also serve as crucial bridging sites for referral to other services, such as primary health care, health insurance, housing and more. These unique and important settings, fueled by passionate employees and volunteers, are indispensable community assets in making sustainable change.

Partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chautauqua County

To address food security and other social service needs in Chautauqua County, Chautauqua Health Network (CHN) has teamed up with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE). Cornell Cooperative Extension brings expertise in essential agricultural and nutrition education knowledge to the group, while Chautauqua Health Network brings well-rounded knowledge in the realm of public health and healthcare. Together, CHN and CCE assessed 20 food pantries over the course of January-May 2023. Throughout these assessments, the group identified key areas that food pantries can improve to provide better services to community residents. Through the CHSC grant, the partnership was able to provide improved cooler displays, signage, and shelving to several food pantries throughout the target service area.

County-Wide Convening

Following this batch of assessments, the team wanted to bring all the pantries together to share the results. In May 2023, several food pantry volunteers and employees gathered together at Jamestown Community College to share best practices surrounding what makes their food pantries work and also examine ways they could improve.

Over eight food pantries were represented and several others, although unable to attend this time, reported they would be interested in participating in similar events in the future.

“I found it very informative, on how we can reach out to other people, other pantries, to assist us and them”—Wendy Nelson, Frewsburg Community Food Pantry

Next Steps.

This work has gotten off to a great start, and everyone is eager to continue! Chautauqua Health Network and Cornell Cooperative Extension are planning to facilitate another County-wide convening in September 2023.

To learn more about our work contact Jabneel Dunn, Community Health Outreach Coordinator at Jabneel.Dunn@chq.health and check out a video of our work here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzr1w_6DHPw.



Featured here are photos from the Food Pantry Convening in May 2023.

CREATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

CHSC STRATEGIES



Physical Activity Access



Worksite & Community Settings



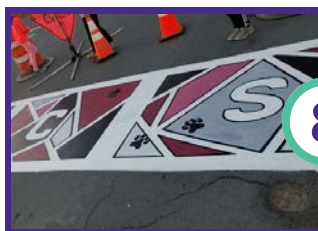
Early Care & Education



School Districts

Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) is a five-year (2021-2026) public health initiative funded by NYS Department of Health that implements a comprehensive, equitable, community-based approach to increasing opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy food for people across the age span. Funding is provided to schools, municipalities, community organizations, worksites and early care settings to improve physical activity and nutrition policies, practices and environments.

Physical Activity Access



8

New Crosswalks

- 5 Standard 'L' Type Crosswalks
- 2 Creative Crosswalks
- 1 Stripe Traverse Crosswalk

Multi-Use Trail Upgrades

- 4 Shade Trees
- 1 Beach Walking Trail

5



14

Streetscape Amenities

- 6 Bike Racks
- 3 Trash Receptacles
- 3 Pet Waste Stations
- 1 Landscaping Project
- 1 Bench

Other Projects

- 6 Sidewalk Repair Projects
- 3 Painted Sidewalk Extensions
- 2 Portable Speed Radars
- 1 Bus Shelter
- 1 Painted Bump-Out.

13



Pedestrian Traffic Signs

- 11 Share the Road Signs
- 9 Pedestrian/Bicyclist Warning Signs
- 5 Bike Warning Signs
- 4 Crosswalk Signs
- 3 Push-Button Crossing Signs
- 3 Arrow Signs
- 2 Ahead Signs
- 1 Park Sign
- 1 Exercise/Fitness Sign



39

Worksite & Community Settings

8

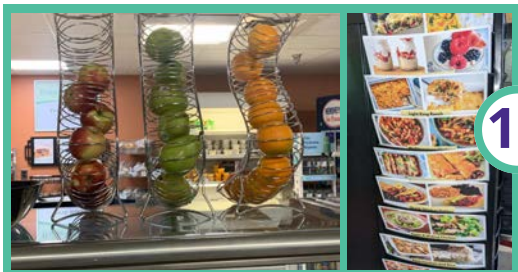
Policies Passed

- 3 Vending
- 2 Food Pantries
- 1 Cafeteria
- 1 Micro-Market
- 1 Snack Bar

Physical Activity Projects

- Bike to Work Promotion with Bike Racks
- Walking Path Maps and Decals
- Trail Enhancement

3



10

Nutrition Projects

- Access to Free, Safe Drinking Water with Hydration Stations
- Indoor/Outdoor Gardening
- Healthy Taste Tests
- Healthy Recipe Promotion
- Healthy Food Display and Promotion

School Districts

6

Participating Schools

- AuSable Valley Central School District (AVCS)
- Beekmantown Central School District (BCSD)
- Northern Adirondack Central School District (NAC)
- Northeastern Clinton Central School District (NCCS)
- Plattsburgh City School District (PCSD)
- Saranac Central School District (SCS)

5

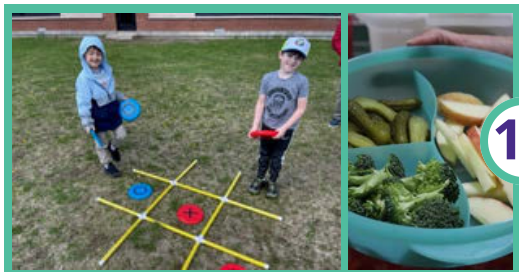


Added Nutrition Supports

- Increased Access to Free, Safe Drinking Water with Hydration Stations
- Incorporated Gardens, Grow Carts, Grow Rooms and Greenhouses.

6

Sites Adopted Wellness Policies



13

Providers Received Nutrition & Physical Activity Training

- Nourishing Healthy Eaters Training
- Physical Activity Learning Sessions (PALS)

Sites Received Resources to Support Nutrition

- Classroom Items for Eating, Serving and Taste Tests
- Growing and Gardening Materials
- Healthy Play Food

8



12

Sites Received Resources to Promote Physical Activity

- Interactive Play Items
- Indoor/Outdoor Equipment for Large and Gross Motor Skills
- Sports Equipment



3

Passed Board Approved Wellness Policies

(BCSD, NCCS, & PCSD)

6



Added Physical Activity Supports

- Traverse Wall Systems
- Sensory Hall Paths
- Recess Packs
- PE Equipment (kayaks, pickle ball, gaga pits, volleyball, tetherball, soccer nets, tennis, and disc golf)
- Fitness Equipment
- Trail Materials
- Creative Crosswalks

3

Created Comprehensive School Physical Activity Plans (CSPAP)

(BCSD, NCCS, & PCSD)

One Step at a Time

The Harry J. McManus Northern Tier Recreation Trail

With the support of Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC), the Town of Champlain, Village of Champlain, Village of Rouses Point and Northeastern Clinton Central School District (NCCS) collaborated to increase access, connectivity and opportunities along the Harry J. McManus Northern Tier Recreation Trail.

Trails & Tribulations

Funds from the Federal Highway Administration, Town and Village of Champlain, Village of Rouses Point, and Tobacco Settlement money were used to establish the trail. The original trail plan aimed to make the area more walkable and bike friendly. It created a safe route between the villages and to the school, thereby addressing resident calls for free, easily accessible, and safe opportunities for activity.

The CHSC Planner met with town officials to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of the new trail system. The CHSC Public Health Educator worked with the school wellness committee gathering feedback on the school's perception and use of the trail. Suggested improvements included: additional safety measures, opportunities for increased inclusiveness, the addition of amenities to attract more interest, and ways to increase visibility and awareness of the trail system.

The Path Forward

A plan was drafted to address each improvement identified and shared with all partners to secure buy-in and commitment to installation and maintenance tasks. Funds from the New York Health Foundation (NYHF) and CHSC were used to complete the upgrades.



Benches and newly planted shade trees along the trail.

Safety improvements included installing traffic delineator posts to clearly mark where the road meets the trail. Posts prevent traffic from crossing the line, adding a layer of protection for pedestrians and cyclists. Trail crossing signs were installed at each point the trail intersects a roadway and at each crosswalk. Solar lights were installed on trail markers to increase visibility at night and in the early morning hours. Benches, shade trees, bike racks and dog waste stations were purchased and installed to broaden the appeal of the trail to more types of users.

Lastly, partners identified the need to increase awareness of the trail to maximize its use. CHSC staff created trail head signs/maps, trail markers and wayfinding signs. Maps and markers show users where the trail starts and ends, and highlight distances between landmarks. CHSC also worked with the NCCS district and Town of Champlain to install a 9-hole disc golf course that starts on school grounds and continues onto town property. The disc golf course is open to the public but will also be utilized in the physical education curriculum at the school. CHSC worked with the Village of Champlain to install a bike fix-it station at the trailhead to compliment other

stations along the trail sponsored by local Eagle Scouts and Village of Rouses Point.



Trail markers, wayfinding signs, solar lights and traffic delineators.

Coming Full Cycle

This project has been years in the making and CHSC was excited to contribute to enhancements over the past two years. The semi-annual pedestrian count showed the number of people using the trail has doubled since last year, indicating the upgrades and promotions have been successful. Partner commitment was key and overwhelmingly positive. The investment from the town, villages, and school led to complimentary grants and additional support from volunteer organizations and businesses. It is a perfect example of a collective impact project.

Trekking Into the Future

Partners working together toward a common goal is what makes this project a success. Each partner has contributed time, money, and resources to ensure appropriate maintenance and growth over time. There are plans for ongoing promotion, community engagement and data tracking to monitor use and ensure the trail continues to meet the needs of the community and its' visitors. There is discussion about potential expansion opportunities to add a baseball field, create spurs to connect the trail to a local federally qualified health center and grocery store, and integrate an outdoor fitness center.

'The Village of Champlain welcomes all the benefits the Harry J. McManus Recreation Trail brings to our residents and visitors. It has created opportunities for exercise during all seasons, allows a safe path for students to walk or bike to the high school, and encourages people to interact as they are outside enjoying the beautiful North Country.' - Janet McFetridge, Village of Champlain Mayor

'The Harry J. McManus Northern Tier Recreation Trail is a substantial part of our town's recreation especially in regards to the connectivity of our Two Villages, our Town Park, and our High School. The trail is a key segment of our town's recreation and a significant factor in attracting families to settle here and grow our community.' -Thomas Trombley, Town of Champlain Supervisor



Disc Golf Course.



Trail Head Map.

'The Harry McManus Recreation Trail is a wonderful amenity for our school and community to utilize. Our students and athletic teams have benefited immensely from having this option to use during nature walks, practices and as well as academic classes using this as an option to facilitate learning or simply a reprieve from the day. The recent addition of the nine hole disc golf course surrounding our school campus and the recreation trail have increased students and community members opportunities to live active and healthy lifestyles exponentially. We are truly a fortunate community to have these privileges.'

-Josh Harrica, NCCS High School Principal

To learn more about our work:

Visit: www.clintonhealth.org/chsc

Email: jessica.law@clintoncountynyny.gov



Implementing an Equitable, District-Wide School Health and Wellness Policy

1. **Project Snapshot:** Healthi Kids, a grassroots coalition and initiative of Common Ground Health, in partnership with the Rochester City School District (RCSd), RCSd parent leaders, and community leaders, successfully advocated for amendments to the district's wellness policy that centered racial health equity while also promoting nutrition, physical activity, play, and active learning in schools.

2. **Issue:** Healthi Kids recognized the importance of addressing nutrition and physical activity in schools to improve the health and well-being of students. Disparities that were already present prior to the COVID-19 pandemic between suburban and urban school districts only widened during the crisis. Healthi Kids identified the need to amend the RCSd wellness policy to enhance and build a supportive environment for healthy behaviors that was trauma-informed and based in racial equity. The goal was to address various aspects of school wellness, including nutrition standards, physical activity, health education, and cultural responsiveness.

3. **Solution/Intervention:** Healthi Kids, RCSd parents, and community stakeholders recognized the need post-pandemic to adopt stronger standards that advance a healthy school-based environment. Using the Wellness School Assessment

Tool 2.0 (WellSAT), Healthi Kids conducted a thorough evaluation of the old policy and developed evidence-based recommendations to drive policy improvements. (See the included infographic on page 3.) To ensure a comprehensive approach, Healthi Kids framed the wellness policy within a racial health equity context, recognizing the importance of addressing disparities and promoting inclusivity. By incorporating this perspective, the policy aimed to create an environment that prioritized the health and well-being of all students, regardless of their background, means, and/or school placement.

Additionally, Healthi Kids recognized the importance of play-based learning and its impact on students' physical and mental well-being. They worked to strengthen the language in the policy, ensuring that recess would not be taken away as a form of punishment. By promoting the value of play and active engagement, Healthi Kids aimed to create a positive and supportive school environment that nurtured students' holistic development.

Further, Healthi Kids advocated for the adoption of stronger language in the policy to support enforcement and implementation than was previously seen in the district. By bolstering the policy's language, Healthi Kids aimed to create a

culture where schools and stakeholders could fully embrace and actively support the wellness initiatives. This included adopting a series of recommendations to improve communication with families about the policy, such as enhancing parent and educator education on the availability of student supports and implementing mechanisms to encourage ongoing communication with families.

Overall, the solutions, developed by RCSD parents and rooted in best practices, aimed to create a robust wellness policy that would advance a healthy, equitable, school-based environment for all students.

4. Outcome/Impact: Armed with the data, RCSD parent leaders and Healthi Kids coalition members went to the school board and the district's Wellness Task Force to seek the adoption of their recommendations. The full set of 20 health and wellness recommendations were ratified by the district in 2022. The implementation of the comprehensive wellness policy is ongoing but has already had significant outcomes and accomplishments. Families, partners, and the community at large have benefited from improved communication about the policy, increased awareness of student supports, and mechanisms to encourage communication with families. The policy has also emphasized the importance of play-based learning, ensuring that recess is not taken away as a form of punishment. Furthermore, the policy includes provisions for safe routes to school, supports breastfeeding for students and staff, and discourages the use of food as rewards or

punishments.

5. Next Steps/Sustainability Plans: Moving forward, Healthi Kids and its partners are committed to sustaining the accomplishments of the wellness policy. They will continue their ongoing campaign, Rescue Recess, to ensure the enforcement of the policy's provisions. Technical assistance, professional development opportunities, and advocacy efforts will be provided to the RCSD, and they will continue to work in partnership with the district's Wellness Task Force. Healthi Kids will also focus on supporting the implementation of the policy in specific school buildings, such as Dr. Walter Cooper Academy School No.10, Dr. Charles T. Lunsford School No. 19, Nathaniel Hawthorne School No. 25, Mary McLeod Bethune School No. 45, and The Flower City School No. 54. Despite challenges faced by some schools in implementing the changes, Healthi Kids remains dedicated to promoting healthy practices and building-level wellness policies in partnership with the community.

RCSD Wellness Policy Recommendations 2022



1 

Frame the policy within a racial health equity context

2 

Enhance accountability for communication and implementation of the policy

3 

Stronger language to support enforcement and implementation of the policy

4 

Better communication with families about the policy

5 

Include language related to the importance of play based learning

6 

Strengthen language that says recess shall not be taken away as a form of punishment

7 

Adopt a new clause related to safe routes to school

8 

Develop a breastfeeding policy for students and staff

9 

Adopt new language that says food shall not be used as a reward/punishment

10 

Update sections on nutrition to meet current federal guidelines

11 

Amend health, physical activity and nutrition ed to meet current NYSED standards

12 

Strengthen language to support professional development for educators and staff

13 

Ensure inclusion and a culturally responsive and sustaining framework in the policy

14 

Adopt comprehensive language to address healthy marketing in schools

15 

Encourage healthy fundraising and celebration guidelines in the classroom

16 

Ensure communication of school meals menus to students and families

17 

Encourage farm to school initiatives

18 

Include School Breakfast Program within nutrition and school meals sections

19 

Amend policy to reflect the newly formed RCSD Meals Advisory Council

20 

Identify how educators can work with support services to address health in the classroom

Success Story

Creating a biking program at Colden Elementary

As part of the New York State Department of Health's Creating Healthy Schools and Communities initiative (CHSC), Erie 1 BOCES is working with the Springville Griffith School District, including Colden Elementary School, to increase opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating.

Getting Colden Students Moving

For the 160 students at Colden Elementary recess has been re-vamped thanks to the creation of a new walking and biking trail around the perimeter of the



school campus. The rural school located in Southern Erie County educates students from pre-K to fifth grade. Of these students 42% are disadvantaged.

The Colden Wellness Committee saw an opportunity to increase physical activity in their school while saving some sneakers in the process. Students had to traverse a lawn to access the school's outdoor classroom and basketball courts. When it rained, this lawn would quickly become a muddy mess and led to limited access to these outdoor features.

Alongside the installation of a walking and bike path, Colden purchased a class set of bikes. Now students will have bicycling as part of their

curriculum, giving students who may not own or have learned to ride a bike the opportunity to ride at school.

Trail Construction

Funding from CHSC was used to purchase the gravel and landscape fabric for the bike trail. The installation in Summer 2022 was completed by Giordano Excavation, who generously donated the labor to complete the project.

To purchase their new twenty-five bike fleet and helmets for students the Wellness Committee relied on community donations and grant funding. The Colden community raised \$5,900 and a grant from "All Kids Bike" brought in an additional \$3,700. The community rallied again to add fun and challenges to the bike path. A trail kiosk was installed and playground features were added with the support.

To prepare students to take full advantage of the new bike path, GoBike Buffalo visited students to host a bike safety class. They also supported the install of two new bike racks for



"As principal, I loved seeing the growth of this whole project from the start. Our students are excited to get outside and ride our bike trail. Over time, their confidence is growing and some students who have never ridden a bike are learning how to ride! I can't wait to see where this goes and thankful for our partners at Creating Healthy Schools and Communities for their partnership!"

- Brooke Langworthy

students to encourage them to ride their own bikes to school.

Creating a Biking Program

The installation of the bike path and purchase of a class bike set has allowed the creation of a bike program at Colden. With



the support of Tom's Pro Bikes, a local Colden bike shop, fifth and third grade students were given a bike skills class to help them either learn to ride or increase their biking capabilities. Colden intends to expand this program to other grades next year. Chandra Anderson, 1st grade teacher, says "The primary students are in awe watching the older students bike ride. They cannot wait to take on the bike trail in the fall!" Starting in Fall 2023, Colden physical education classes will include the "All Bike" curriculum.

Outside of the classroom the bikes will be available for older students to use during recess. Biking is also being incorporated into the Mighty Movers afterschool program. "Since implementing biking at a Colden Elementary there is a noticeable excitement amongst the students. Students are all at different skill levels. Despite that they are all cheering for each other's accomplishments as they tackle the challenges of the bicycle playground features and trail riding. The joy felt being a part of the progression and milestone moments such as watching a student pedal for the first time is indescribable." Says Erin Georger, a parent volunteer with the bike program.

The Future for the Colden Bike Program

The Colden bike program intends to grow into the future. The Wellness Committee is working on bringing a bike storage shed to campus to move their bike fleet out of the building and into outdoor

secure storage. The trail will be resurfaced with a mixture of clay and slit to create a safer, smoother riding surface. This will make it easier for younger students to ride.

Nearby, there is a larger Rail Trail that supports biking throughout the region. The committee is working to connect these two trails.



To learn more about our work:

Website: www.e1b.org/creatinghealthy

Email: khuber@e1b.org





New Technology Improves Access to Healthy Foods

As part of the New York State Department of Health's Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) initiative, Resurrection Life Food Pantry in Cheektowaga, NY implemented new technology to serve their patrons.

For the 1400 families Resurrection Life Food Pantry serves each month, new technology has made access and communication easier than ever. Within a short walking distance of the food pantry are the DePaul's Apple Blossom Apartments, which house low-income residents. Unique to these apartments are forty units designed specifically to accommodate Deaf residents.

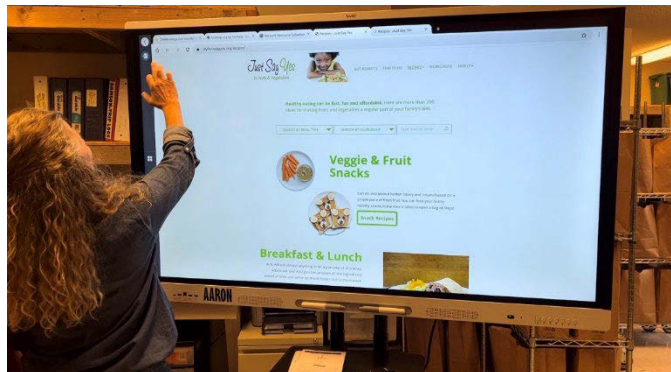
Resurrection Life Food Pantry Director, Kim Reynolds met Creating Healthy Schools and Communities Grant Coordinator, Kate Huber while sitting on the Cheektowaga Community Coalition. It was here Reynolds shared the inequity at her food pantry for Deaf community members. It was difficult, if not impossible, for patrons to share allergy information, ask questions or inform her of dietary preferences when receiving their food from the pantry. After talking and collaborating, Kate was able to procure funding from the grant to supply Resurrection food pantry with new technology to improve communication and increase the agency of community members.

Solution/Intervention

Funding from CHSC was used to purchase an all-weather smart board and two iPads loaded up with the latest American Sign Language (ASL) transcription software.

Now when anyone from the Deaf community comes to the Resurrection Life Food Pantry, they are greeted by a volunteer with an iPad. They are able to communicate about preferences, ask questions about foods they may be unfamiliar with or source healthy recipes.

The Smart Board not only provides a means of communication for the Deaf community, but also acts as a resource for all who come to the pantry. The board can connect them with community resources, give them more information about FeedMore WNY and other agencies that can help with food insecurity, allow them to print off recipes, and provide nutritional information like healthy shopping habits, and how to avoid processed foods.



"Sometimes we have an excess amount of something like beans and the community we serve would normally not know what to do with all these beans, but now with this wonderful new technology the CHSC grant has provided for us, we can give them full access to so many ways and recipes they can eat and prepare the beans in inviting ways."

-Kim Reynolds

Outcome/Impact

For many community members who rely on Resurrection Life Food Pantry, this new technology transforms their experience from transactional to transformational. Before they may have just come in, grabbed a bag of food and left. They missed out on important information about what fresh foods were being offered and how to cook healthy, nutritious meals for their families. With the help of this new technology patrons are communicating, asking questions, learning and coming together around food and nutrition.

Next Steps/Sustainability Plans

Going forward, Resurrection Life Food Pantry will work to leverage this new technology to offer a custom shopping experience, where the community members who rely on their services can choose what they would like in their bags. Through education and communication, Resurrection hopes to continue to see an increase in agency and healthy decision making from those coming to the pantry.

The Creating Healthy Schools and Communities grant team is honored to support the important work of Resurrection and push forward ways to make access to fresh, healthy foods more equitable for Western New Yorkers.

To learn more about our work:

Website: www.e1b.org/creatinghealthy

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Success Story

Growing in the classroom

The Health Promotion Center (HPC) at Glens Falls Hospital (GFH) had worked hard over the past two years to assist schools district in increasing local product in their cafeteria meals and agricultural education and experiences in their classrooms.

Since the inception of New York State Farm-to-School Program, which was created to connect schools with local farms and food producers to strengthen local agriculture, improve student health, and promote regional food systems awareness, Warren and Washington County Schools have struggled to bring local fruits and vegetables to their students, even though they are in an agricultural region. Local farms and school districts have not had the capacity to lead an administrative initiative to coordinate local buying efforts or transport purchases from local farms to schools. Coordinating with local farmers to plan appropriately for the growing season is complicated in that the planning season for the farmers does not coincide with the food service directors planning for their next school year.

School districts have historically been challenged with traditional outdoor garden beds because they lack staff, students, and volunteers in the summer to care for outside gardens. In many situations, cafeteria staff is also not available to process and freeze the produce for the upcoming year. The benefit of using the garden as another classroom learning space is also not conducive to the school year schedule.



Johnsburg CSD students grow vegetables for school cafeteria.

Schools have gravitated toward indoor growing systems, which can easily be incorporated into the classroom and school year schedule. Classrooms from Preschool to grade 12, including science, home and careers, and special education classes, have integrated gardens, allowing teachers to utilize them for several topic areas and lessons. Currently, Granville, Whitehall, Johnsburg, and North Warren have indoor growing capacity.



Johnsburg Central School presently has indoor grow trays in several of their classrooms, including their Science and Family and Consumer Science (FACS) classrooms. They have provided their harvests to the school cafeteria to be used in their school's meal program, classroom taste testing, and meals cooked by the FACS class.

At Mary J Tanner Primary School, the 1st through 3rd grade special education students have a unique relationship with the Agricultural students from Granville Jr. Sr. High School. The students in the high school program visit the primary school and assist with their tower garden and mentor the students on growing skills. This model is being shared with other school districts and will hopefully be replicated next year with the high school students mentoring the elementary students.



Granville Agriculture Program high school students mentoring Mary J Tanner students.

Glens Falls Hospital Health Promotion Center has worked collaboratively with Comfort Food Community (CFC) for several years. CFC provides fresh, wholesome food through a dynamic operation of programs, including Edible Education. GFH has partnered with CFC, connecting area schools with their administrative capacity to coordinate orders of local products for schools and utilization of their food hub storage facility.

Schools have taken on producing their own food; and it's working! The Johnsburg Science class alone, from October to March, produced so many herbs that a dehydrator was required. A single growing tray produced 3 trays of microgreens, 2 trays of parsley, 14 cucumbers, 36 tomatoes, 40 chili peppers, and 14 ounces of arugula.

“They have loved watching the garden grow. At first, we measured and graphed the growth of the plants. Now, we

enjoy hunting through the "jungle" of tomato plants to see if we can spot any that are ripening. Having the tower garden has also helped make the students more aware of the variety of growing things like the spring flowers and flowering trees outside our window. They often ask if they can plant the seeds from fruit they eat at lunch. This has been an amazing project! Thanks so much." Mrs. Monaco- Mary J.
Tanner Primary School



Mary J. Tanner students go "hunting" for tomatoes to eat as a classroom snack.

Before implementing a garden program, we ask schools to form garden committees and establish a plan with the district to include the needed materials in their next budget year. The Health Promotion Center has created a network of teachers and food service directors that have integrated gardening into their classrooms and school districts. Teachers can ask questions of

other teachers throughout the two counties to help guide them through the ups and downs of gardening.

We currently have two more school districts, Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, that will be implementing programs for next school year. This will grow our network of school districts to six out of ten CHSC schools. Christ Church Preschool will be adding a community location for growing along with North Warren Preschool.

"A huge success for us is that we have met as a team and put together a great proposal for extending our garden to an outdoor one next year. Just yesterday our superintendent gave me the go-ahead to go forward with planning, which is extremely exciting!" Sarah Fink Johnsbury Central School

For the upcoming grant year CHSC has plans to coordinate Agriculture in the Classroom training for the staff. We continue to connect staff with other districts' staff to ask questions and tackle issues and challenges.

**To learn more about our work:
Visit:**

<https://www.glensfallshospital.org/services/community-services/health-promotion-center/>

Email:

ehoffman@glensfallshosp.org

Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) is Supporting a Food Pantry with Sowing Seeds that Take Root

A mid-summer 2022 CHSC planning conversation with the Batavia Salvation Army provided ample food for thought by nourishing a new partnership with Batavia National Grid that resulted in preparing the ground and building raised beds in the Fall 2022 to start a community garden. The Batavia Salvation Army's food pantry serves as a critical support for community members. A community garden will expand the opportunity for meal prep and pantry options that incorporate produce grown on site.

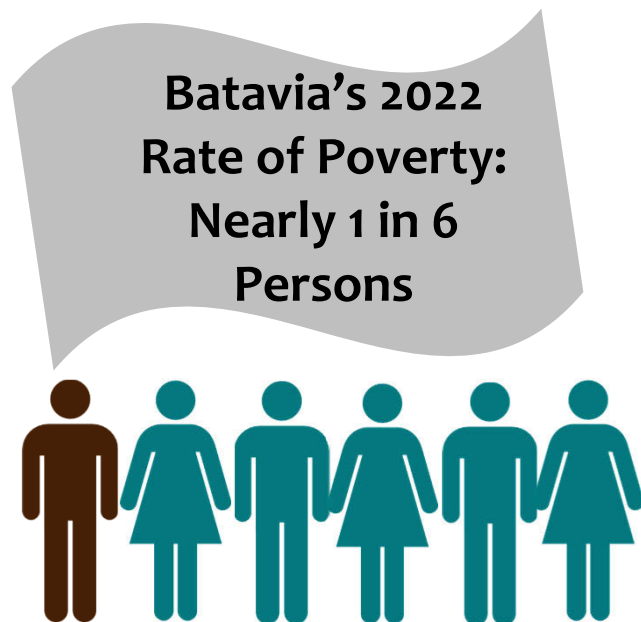
The Impact that is Taking Root Includes:

Expanding partnerships to amplify a collective focus on equity for increasing healthy, affordable food options in Batavia.

Creating an inviting, inclusive, participatory and sustainable community garden that generates an authentic experience with and interest in growing and eating fresh produce among community members, including youth/students.

Increasing access to a variety of produce grown on site and available at local farm markets for community members, including youth/students.

Developing skills and confidence with preparing meals using available produce all year.



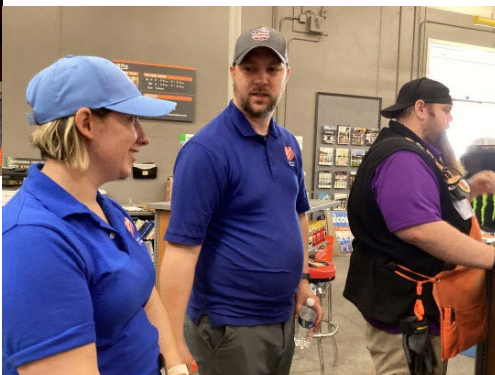
In 2023, the USDA Economic Research Service reported 32.1 percent of households with incomes below the Federal poverty line were food insecure.

National rates of food insecurity were highest for households headed by single mothers at 24.3%, as well as households headed by African Americans (19.8%) and Hispanics (16.2%) in 2021.

Fifty-five percent of the Batavia City School District (CSD) student population is economically disadvantaged. Batavia CSD is helping to address student food insecurity by participating in the Community Eligibility Provision and serving all students breakfast and lunch at no charge.

With community stakeholders and partners, we are beginning to create an easily accessible opportunity for community members to authentically experience growing and eating produce.

From planning
to being ready
for planting!



A Community Garden that Will Continue to Take Root

"The gardening materials and supplies provided by CHSC have been vital for converting empty garden beds into a fertile Community Garden and will continue to help us in the coming years. Additionally, one of our staff members is generously providing space in his greenhouse to sow seeds and cultivate their transformation to garden ready plants, a great resource that will help us with our future planting needs. We are very thankful for the support and excited about being able to create a community garden." Rachel Moore, Captain Corps Officer, USA Eastern Territory The Salvation Army | Batavia Corps



**Creating Healthy Schools
and Communities**

This work was supported by Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC), a five-year (2021-2026) New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) funded initiative, helping to build stronger, healthier communities.

To learn more about our work in the Genesee Valley Region please email us:
Email: SSSCenter@gvboces.org



Success Story

Improving School Physical Activity Access Through Open Streets

As part of the New York State Department of Health's Creating Healthy Schools and Communities program, Bronx Health REACH is working with Equity Design, Street Lab, PS 32 and PS 18 to activate the schools' surrounding space in order to increase students' physical activity access. The goal is to create spaces known as "Open Streets" that can be utilized by the schools, and their surrounding communities, for movement and fitness.

Building a Healthier Bronx

The current ranking of the Bronx is #62 out of the 62 New York State counties in health outcomes and health factors, according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings Report. The Bronx is the greenest Borough with large park areas; however, it is also a fitness desert. There are many inequities seen throughout the Bronx that limit the access and utilization of all this green space, contributing to the high rates of chronic illnesses and the low quality of life rankings in the Bronx. Schools are a beacon for many communities, by not only educating the students and being the place where children spend most of their day, but also connecting parents to resources around the community.

For many children, their school is where they receive the majority of their meals and physical activity to keep them healthy. The CDC recommends that children and adolescents get at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily. School-based Physical Activity, included as part of a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP), can increase the physical activity that students receive at school. However, many students in the Bronx do not get enough physical activity because of limited indoor space, lack of open space/safe streets, and underutilization of nearby parks, many of which are in disrepair.



Photo credit: Street Lab

During their Open Street, teachers and students at PS 32 enjoyed trying to jump rope as a group in unison.

In response to these challenges, Bronx Health REACH has been working with PS 32, The Belmont School, to make the school a fitness hub for the community, and with PS 18, the John Peter Zenger School, to expose the community to different forms of physical activity. The goals of these schools are to improve their school spirit and community engagement through physical activity, as well as provide physical activity opportunities before and after school.

Activating the Spaces

In an effort to help PS 32 and PS 18 activate their surrounding environments, Bronx Health REACH partnered with Equity Design and Street Lab to assist the schools in hosting Open Street events, which took place during the 2022-2023 school year, during the Fall and Spring semesters. In preparation for these events, Bronx Health REACH and Equity Design provided schools with technical assistance in the planning and execution of the events and connecting the schools with additional resources. Street Lab obtained the permits for each school. On the closed streets, the entire school and community had access to an obstacle course and art activities provided by Street Lab, as well as street games provided by Equity Design.

CHSC | Success Story

PS 32 closed down Beaumont Avenue, between 183rd Street and Grote Street, and held Open Street events after school on two consecutive Tuesdays in October 2022, and on three consecutive Tuesdays in May 2023. During their Open Streets, Equity Design led a school wide walking group around the school (one lap around the school is about ¼ of a mile). During Spring 2023, Street Lab, Equity Design and Bronx Health REACH held seven “WalkShops” with a second grade class at PS 32, in which students learned about street design and what is an Open Street. Students shared their visions for an Open Street and this inspired the themes of PS 32’s Spring Open Streets. The themes included PS 32 World Cup (soccer), Celebration of the Arts, and Beaumont Avenue Waterpark.



Photo credit: Street Lab

Top picture: Students at PS 32 utilized equipment provided by Street Lab to create their own soccer arena to play.

Bottom picture: Cyclists from Major Taylor joined PS 18’s Open Street events and taught the kids how to ride a bike.

PS 18 closed down 148th Street between Morris



Photo credit: Equity Design

Avenue and College Avenue, and held Open Street events on three consecutive Saturdays in October

2022 and on one Monday in May 2023. PS 18 was gifted 65 bikes and helmets by USA Cycling and Major Taylor Development, an inclusive national cycling club. Thanks to this partnership, PS 18 was able to realize their vision of introducing students to other forms of physical activity, starting with biking. Major Taylor also came and provided a biking clinic during PS 18’s Open Street events. Students learned how to ride a bike and to ride safely on the Open Street. During the Spring semester, PS 18 held a Teachers’ Appreciation Open Street Event and gave their teachers an opportunity to experience the Open Street and connect with one another through games and bike riding.

Nothing But Happiness and Health

At PS 32, the participation of the school and the community in the Open Streets increased every week through word of mouth. During the three consecutive Tuesdays in May 2023, participation increased from about 100 participants on the first Tuesday to 200 on the third Tuesday. Parents participated in the activities as well, and community members approached the organizers and volunteered to help with set up. Everyone expressed how great it was to see a safe place created where students can have fun.

At PS 18, students and community members from the nearby NYC Housing Authority development who have never been on a bike were able to learn how to ride a bike and practice on the closed street. During their three consecutive Saturdays in October 2022, registration on the first Saturday was low, with only 15 students registering, but by the third Saturday, over 90 students registered to ride a bike.

Planning for the Future

Through the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities program, Bronx Health REACH plans to continue our work with PS 32 and PS 18. Our plan is to provide the necessary support so that each school’s Wellness Council takes ownership of the planning and organization of Open Streets

with the goal of sustainability in mind. We hope that by activating the open spaces around the schools through Open Streets this will demonstrate the need for cleaner and safer streets for the community and for increasing access to physical activity access, so elected officials and other community leaders will be prompted to help to fill these needs. By supporting the schools in implementing Complete Streets work, this can lead to permanent infrastructure changes that realizes the vision of the schools and meets the needs of the overall community.

To learn more about our work:

Visit: <https://institute.org/bronx-health-reach/about/>

Email: Dibernal@institute.org



Community Collaboration Offers Fresh Produce & Kids Eat It Up!



Summary

In 2023, partners came together for a second year to increase better access to produce and farm-to-school activities for Kingston City School District students as part of the Creating Health Schools and Communities Grant Project.

What veggie is prone to getting dizzy?

Spin-ach!

CHILDREN SHOULD EAT 2-3 CUPS VEGETABLES AND 2 CUPS FRUIT A DAY



The Challenge

Current findings from the USDA suggest most children throughout the U.S. eat only one cup of fruit and one cup of vegetables a day. Additionally, more than half of all students within the Kingston City School District qualify for free school meals, signifying a lack of access to fresh produce.

The Results

Last school year, the USDA-funded Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program reached about 60 students in one school. This year it reached over 1100 students in three schools, a programmatic growth of nearly 2000%.

Over 100 different fruits and vegetables have been served.

Many teachers and parents anecdotally report that students are eating previously disliked fruits and vegetables.

Rondout Valley Growers Association has agreed to sign on as a vendor for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to provide locally grown produce and farming/nutrition education to the students once a month.

STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAM

eat 1/3 cup more produce daily

“ She asks for blueberries to be packed for lunch ” when previously she didn’t eat much fruit at all.



– Parent, Kingston City School District



The Approach

During the 2022-2023 school year, three schools received training, technical assistance, and resources to increase access to healthy food outside the school meal program.

Building on a successful pilot year, the Kingston City School District food service expanded the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to two more schools with advocacy and coordination from building wellness committees.

The Rondout Valley Growers Association, a local farm coalition, provided locally grown spinach for the first annual "spinach fest" after-school event at John F. Kennedy Elementary School that celebrated May's vegetable of the month with various spinach tastings, gardening, face painting, and more!

1ST ANNUAL
SPINACH FEST

65

ATTENDEES

10 lbs

OF SPINACH USED

100

SAMPLES TASTED

What's Next?

The vegetable of the month will be promoted in other schools through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program with locally grown produce and education provided by the Rondout Valley Growers Association's farm-to-school coordinator.

Once established, the hope is to utilize RVGA to procure locally-grown food for school meals.

To learn more about our work visit:

www.kingston-ny.gov/health-and-wellness/chsc

Email Kristin Kessler at: kkessler@kingston-ny.gov



**Creating Healthy Schools
and Communities**

This work was supported by Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC), a five-year (2021-2026) New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) funded initiative, helping to build stronger, healthier communities.

Partners included:
Cornell Cooperative
Extension of Ulster
County, Rondout Valley
Growers Association,
Kingston City School
District Foodservice,
Land to Learn, school
staff, and students.



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Ulster County



Planning an Everyday Destination for the Local Community



The City of Kingston, NY, hired KaN Landscape Design to develop a community-

driven design of two new greenspaces along the Kingston Greenline (a network of trails and complete streets) to support and encourage walking and bicycling. The outreach feedback was the most diverse of recent City projects.

PLANNING FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Creating a beautiful design along a crucial, yet currently bare juncture of the Kingston Greenline right in the heart of Midtown Kingston will encourage and support more people to choose to walk or bike. Not only does it make the trip more desirable and pleasant, but the designs will provide shade structures and benches

for those who might need to rest, along with bike racks so that people can safely secure their bikes.

ANCHORED IN HISTORY

The opportunity for new pocket parks came about when the intersection was realigned in 2021. Historically, at this location, was a beautiful post office built in 1908 that was torn down during the Urban Renewal era. A robust outreach was needed because the destruction of the architectural gem is still a sore point for the community.



Photo from the Friends of Historic Kingston as printed in the Life and Death of the Post Office by Blauweiss Media.

YOUTH-LED PROCESS

One of the reasons that KaN Landscape Design was chosen was their unique suggestion of having the youth lead the process. They worked with three local organizations, YMCA Farm Project, Place Corps, and PUGG/DRAW Kingston to host youth-led workshops in an iterative process of creating conceptual designs.

Additionally, they conducted extensive community outreach by partnering with multiple local organizations and community events. They studied past relevant plans and found inspiration from other cities.



that it would increase community ownership and buy-in.

NEXT PHASE

The City of Kingston has secured over \$500,000 in funding to construct a "phase 1" of the design in either fall 2023 or spring 2024 and is having early conversations about how to fund the rest of the design in future years.

Multiple departments

collaborated to ensure the feasibility and sustainability of the spaces, including Parks & Recreation, Engineering, Public Works, Water, and Arts & Culture.

Public Outreach by the Numbers

75

Number of Youth Involved

144

Snacks Given Out

1,500

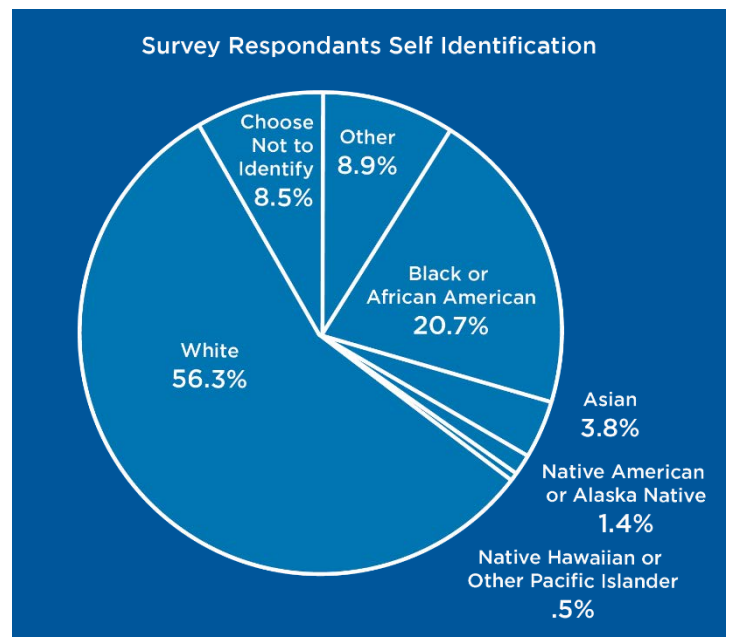
Estimated People Reached

50%

Of Respondents that Use
Non-Vehicular Transportation

SUCCESSFUL OUTREACH

In addition to this work, KaN conducted or attended over 8 community events during 2 months of outreach during the fall of 2022, at which they spoke with an estimated 1500 community members and received 267 responses to a community survey. Around 50% of the respondents reported that they usually get to the spaces by a mode of transportation other than a car and nearly 50% of them lived in the neighborhood (Midtown). It was a more diverse group of respondents as well, with 35% identifying as BIPOC, and over 20% identifying as Hispanic or Latino. This diversity was identified as a goal for the project with the hope



Following the presentation of the final design one person wrote:

"This rendering looks absolutely beautiful. Please build this!"

To learn more about our work visit:

[www.kingston-ny.gov/
health-and-wellness/chsc](http://www.kingston-ny.gov/health-and-wellness/chsc)

Email: kkessler@kingston-ny.gov



Success Story

Salmon River School District Seed to Tray Program Takes Root

Project Summary

A multi-year investment in nutrition and food systems at Salmon River Central School District is boosting health and wellness for students and faculty, and providing kids with critical tools to take ownership of local food systems. This work was made possible through funding and technical support from The Heart Network's Creating Healthy Schools & Communities (CHSC) program in Franklin County.

Issue

Salmon River school district identified a need for healthier food options, and a desire to teach students how to grow their own food, for both nutritional purposes and to give them tools to grow their own food, a crucial life skill and a means to give their community more control of local food production. Classrooms, however, lacked the necessary resources and equipment to bring ideas into action. With support from CHSC, Salmon River was able to turn this need into an opportunity.

Solution/Intervention

The first step was to establish the Salmon River school's Seed to Tray Program with the construction of grow carts. After receiving the grant, the school appointed its high school Agricultural Inquiry class as project leader, with the responsibility of getting the carts up and running. Once built, the students went to work, using the grow carts to plant and care for lettuce and herbs that were used to supply the cafeteria throughout the school year.



Salmon River school grow carts, purchased and assembled with support from The Heart Network's CHSC program.

The Agricultural Inquiry class met daily, so the students were able to provide constant maintenance for the carts and monitor any adverse events that arose. One such challenge was that once all nine racks were operational, the students discovered a humidity issue, stemming from 25 seed trays holding water in a confined space. The students were empowered to research the problem, which led to a solution: the class used a portion of the CHSC grant to purchase and install fans to ventilate the space.

“The spring mix and basil grown by students doesn’t just save the district money — it provides students with real-world, hands-on experience in the process of growing food. These greens are a good supplement to what the district purchases from outside vendors, and it addresses the sustainability of the school’s ability to increase access to nutritious foods.”

— Michelle Oakes, Salmon River School District



Students at Salmon River school show off greens grown and harvested in their Agricultural Inquiry class.

Outcome/Impact

Over time, the class gained the confidence to maintain all nine racks — and realized the project could be expanded. Salmon River school used CHSC funds to purchase materials to construct and equip a small greenhouse that will become operational for the 2023-24 school year, serving as an extension of the Seed to Tray program. This greenhouse will be used to provide the cafeteria not just with vegetables and herbs, but also fruit. It will also provide a space for summer school students to gain project-based learning experiences and an introduction to the Agricultural Inquiry program.

“The success of our grow cart program has been largely due to the cooperation and willingness of our students to get their hands dirty and try new things.”

— Michelle Oakes, Salmon River School District

This program has immediate impacts on health and wellness in the school, but also long term impacts on students’ lives. When students take ownership of food production, it gives them a life-long skill and lets them take pride in their work.

Next Steps/Sustainability Plans

This program is self-sustainable in that the grow carts and greenhouse will be used by future students, and students will continue to learn and adjust methods over time.

The Seed to Tray program is just one aspect of a larger push to enhance wellness and nutrition at Salmon River school. In Spring 2023, The Heart Network and the school began an audit of walking trails on campus to find ways to improve them for students and adults. Early ideas include adding better lighting so trails can be used after dark, and activity centers for kids.

Seed to Tray at Salmon River featured on NCPR:

bit.ly/seedtotrayNCPR

To learn more about our work:

Visit: www.heartnetwork.org

Email: mgreenwood@heartnetwork.org

Success Story

Activating School Safety Routes in Brooklyn

As part of the New York State Department of Health's Creating Healthy Schools and Communities initiative, the Center for Health Equity and Community Wellness (CHECW), within the New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, created the East Brooklyn Biking Club to collaborate with Bergen Bike Bus, Citi Bike, and Get Woman Cycling to activate the Bergen Street Bike Lanes that connects community residents to local schools in Brooklyn, NY.

The Opportunity of Bike Lanes

Utilization of the bike routes in NYC and specifically in Brooklyn is hindered by many infrastructure and perception issues. The road priorities differ for drivers and riders; however, road safety and bike lane upkeep are integral to support biking in our area.

Improving and facilitating use of bike routes contribute to addressing environmental and physical health by lessening carbon monoxide emissions and increasing physical activity. The goal is for multiple points of intervention to intersect to increase ridership. Creating safer streets for riders, increasing visibility of riders, and connecting to everyday destinations in Brooklyn will add to this goal.

Community Coming Together

The idea germinated from a schoolteacher in Brownsville, a neighborhood in Brooklyn, who attended a Bike the Block event in 2022. She wanted to connect bike routes to her school across the borough over 5 miles away. With extensive community engagement the East Brooklyn Biking Club began their pilot rides in the spring. Each of the school administrations were brought into the process to make the drop off to school safe and bring awareness of project to the school community.



Bergen Bike Bus on the way to schools

The rides started in March 2023 and lasted through the end of the school year. Every Wednesday morning the group would meet at a Citi Bike docking station in Brownsville and ride together for approximately one hour to the six schools on the course. The last school is next to a Citi Bike docking station and there are many docking stations close by along the route, so there is a seamless transition to return the bikes. Most families hop off the Bike Bus when they arrive at their school, while some families will participate for the entire ride to assist with the whole group. The group has designated safety marshals placed throughout the Bike Bus to be aware of traffic lights, impediments, and other issues to keep the group safe.

The bike route does not feature completely protected bike lanes, but the entire route is a continuous bike lane. Citi Bike generously donated codes for riders to gain access to free e-bikes and traditional bikes at the docking stations. We provided reflective safety high-visibility vests for the students with the branding of Bike Bus, so the group was visible and a moving advertisement of the work.

We notify the Department of Transportation (DOT) when there is a need for infrastructure

improvements including issues with traffic lights, stop signs, potholes, bike lane markers, speed reducers, and signage. We also notify [Vision Zero](#), an initiative to improve street safety, when there are potentially dangerous issues that could affect the community.

This project addresses not only physical activity and the utilization of bike lanes, but also the larger picture of changing the landscape of promoting biking within Brooklyn. In making activity friendly routes to everyday destinations, we are illustrating there are opportunities for growth to support biking. This project is a piece of the larger burgeoning network that will connect over 30 schools in four different neighborhoods to biking routes.

Improving health and safety

Over the course of March – June, 2023, we had 12-15 families participate in each weekly Bike Bus, and the vast majority of them were consistent riders who were invested in the project. In our last ride for the school year, we had 40 people riding. We were able to connect Bergen Bike Bus to another Bike Bus along the route going to more schools in Brooklyn.

While we hope to consistently grow the project, the attendance is a mere data point of other impacts including bringing forth awareness for a safe, effective, environmentally positive, and physically engaging way to travel to schools. Additionally, when we advocate for safety with DOT and Vision Zero it means the community at large is benefiting from infrastructure improvements.

The bike rides gained attention from elected officials, including the Brooklyn Borough President, the Mayor, and the assistant commissioner for DOT who participated in a ride. All expressed their support of the rides. In June, the rides were profiled in the [NY times](#). This awareness will help promote a safety presence, further infrastructure improvements, and hopefully create replication of this pilot.

Moving Forward

This project is endeavoring to improve the larger bike lane infrastructure, so we hope to have the DOT include this on their publicly available bike map as part of accessible routes.

Recruiting more schools and participants, as well as doing more promotion and advertisement, will bolster the work and ensure its sustainability. With support from the city and the community we aim to connect riders to their community.

To learn more about our work:

www.nyc.gov/site/doh/index.page



Success Story

Enhancing the Built Environment Through Advocacy in East and Central Harlem

Project Snapshot/Summary

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH) works with community organizations to make physical activity, namely walking and biking in East and Central Harlem, accessible to all residents. With support through the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities grant, the Department provides technical assistance to organizations who advocate for improvement in the built environment.

Public Health Challenge

East Harlem adults suffer from high rates of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension; these rates are higher than that of New York City.¹ Engaging in physical activity is important to reduce the prevalence of chronic diseases. Walking, rolling, and biking are common exercises that children and adults can enjoy. However, in East Harlem biking is a major concern for residents, as this form of physical activity is the fifth leading cause of premature deaths in the community.²

El Barrio Bikes, a community-led biking group, and walking groups, such as Odyssey House, continue to advocate for improvement within their neighborhood by connecting with

local city agencies and other organizations who are working towards the same goal. Community members want their voices to be heard and be stakeholders within their neighborhood. The NYC DOHMH Community Engagement Framework is employed in all works to ensure that residents are leaders and engaged in all public health causes.

Approach

Advocacy through data collection and programming is at the core of the work by the community groups. Through the Creating Healthy Schools and Community grant, NYC DOHMH supports El Barrio Bikes and the East Harlem Walking group to collect data about the conditions of the environment. Community members shared concerns and feedback during the semi-annual Pedestrian and Bicyclist Manual Count event. During this event, volunteers recorded any hindrance to walking and biking in the neighborhood. We work with other city agencies, namely the New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT), to use the data for advocacy work such as potentially installing street furniture and wayfinding maps. Community groups also use an Activity Tracking Survey to

collect data on the various walking and biking events.

Results

As a result of their local advocacy work, El Barrio Bikes collaborated with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP) to work towards advancing health equity and structural inequities. El Barrio Bikes promotes physical activity in the neighborhood through hosting biking activities. Through their outreach program, El Barrio Bikes, builds strong partnerships with other organizations like The Brown Bike Girl who provides bike leader training, Transportation Alternatives, We Out and Uptown Grand Central. The local biking organization also supports local businesses and promotes arts and culture by partnering with local bike shops, hosting themed bike rides, such as Hot Chocolate Rides and guided art tour rides in East and Central Harlem. As advocates for biking equity, El Barrio Bikes hosts community rides for Spanish speakers and collaborates with InTandem, a cycling organization for those who are vision impaired. El Barrio Bikes and the community walking group continue to coordinate physical activity events for residents at all physical activity levels.

Community members also work with NYC DOT and Vision Zero to discuss improvement to locations of concern and to eliminate biking and pedestrian accidents. Vision Zero recently installed 2,200 cameras that will monitor speeding vehicles for twenty-four hours seven days a week. NYC DOT projects also include a bike lane hardening that will protect bike riders

as they share the street with motor vehicles.



Community residents collecting data on street conditions at the Pedestrian and Bicyclist Manual Count.

What's Next

We are working to build a citizen science program that will allow residents to collect data for advocacy projects. Residents would have the opportunity to learn and engage in the scientific process, particularly data collection. All volunteers of various skills and professions can get involved in the project on enhancing the built environment for walking and biking. This platform supports large data collection, promotes inclusivity, and increases public health awareness on the importance of physical activity and the barriers that need to be dismantled to ensure that everyone can thrive within their community.

To learn more about our work please contact:

[Nilsa Torres, CHSC Program Manager at NYC DOHMH East Harlem](#)

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Success Story

Walk your Way to Health at Van Buren Central Park

The Onondaga County Health Department's Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) Program worked with the Van Buren Central Park to develop a plan for increasing access to walking spaces and healthy snacks for their community.

The initial plan was to work with Van Buren Park leadership and staff to identify ways for increasing access to healthier food options available at the park's concession stand. Park leadership expanded their focus to include an additional new project that involved the creation of a walking path within the park.

The park has a beautiful pond that many people walk around even though there is no pavement surrounding it. This was leading community members to walk in the way of traffic and along some wooded areas that should be avoided.

The park had completed all of the necessary measuring and received quotes for the walking path to be installed along the pond. Unfortunately, the cost was higher than anticipated due to drainage and other precautions that would need to take place because of the pond. Additionally, the CHSC team could not fund the project because it is a capital improvement. However, the CHSC team kept in touch with the park staff during the winter months to maintain the relationship that had been formed.

We knew we still wanted a new safe way for community members to be able to walk at the park come spring.

Through the CHSC team's relationship with the park, we were able to support a new location selected for a safe walking path. The park was able to identify a location that could be enhanced for community members to walk.



Photo Credit: Adriana Savage

The new location is a 1 mile total loop that takes advantage of an underutilized trail in the woods and keep people out of the way of traffic. This trail will connect to the path around the pond! The park completed all the measuring to determine the materials needed to complete the new trail. Additionally, the park was creative and able to utilize wood chippings from the spring to lay the bottom layer of the trail, which reduced the cost of crushed stone needed.

The CHSC team developed the signage with health messaging and arranged for the crushed stone and other needed materials to be delivered. The park staff were able to install the signs and lay the crush stone.

"I honestly didn't think this project would be happening, after speaking to you last time. The amount of the project just seemed so far out of reach. In the meantime, I sat down with our Town Supervisor and she had put a grant into the state to fund the walking trail." **-Heidi Anders, Van Buren Parks and Recreation Director**

CHSC | Success Story

Beginning in August of 2022, the park officially had a new walking route to promote to the Van Buren community. The trail is utilized by families, runners, and dog walkers who frequent the park.

Additionally, an unintentional goal was also accomplished. Through all the ground work that was done to explore the walking trail around the pond, the Town of Van Buren Supervisor and park explored additional funds that might be available to make the original path around the pond a reality. They were able to apply for and secure a different grant through New York State that will not only cover the cost of the trail but also additional improvement needs of the park.

We will be piloting a new initiative and offering healthy snacks at the park concession stand starting in the summer of 2023.

These improvements impact the entire community who utilize the park for walking, leisure, sport events, summer camps and the pool.

The Onondaga County Health Department's CHSC team and staff at the Van Buren Central Park speak regularly to continue to grow the scope of work done to achieve a healthy environment for the community.

We continue to promote the trail and engage the community at local events that take place at the park in order to gather community members input on additional improvements that can be made in the future.

To learn more about our work:

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Creating Healthy Schools and Communities in Orange County



Success Story

Love and Passion for Early Childhood

Project Summary

The Orange County Creating Healthy Schools and Communities program (CHSC) has been working with Early Care and Education (ECE) programs helping them improve their physical activity and nutrition practices.

Issue

CHSC, in combination with the Orange County Health Department, has been emphasizing the public health initiative to increase opportunities for physical activity and improved nutrition in high-need communities of New York State. This approach supports and aligns with the New York State Department of Health Prevention Agenda (2019-2024) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) New York State Physical Activity and Nutrition Program (2018-2023).

Home daycares face multiple challenges. Besides keeping up with the licensing requirements perhaps the biggest struggle is to keep all children learning and advancing their developmental milestones accordingly.

The safety and well-being of children, and the daily routines and engagement plays an important role in ECE, hence the importance of using the appropriate tools and equipment. Unfortunately, for some family, group, or home daycares access to proper learning tools can be challenging.

Solution

The Orange County CHSC program has been working with small ECE programs to make policy and practice changes by giving them technical assistance, education, as well as the tools to make learning and playing time more fun and enjoyable.



Photo Credit: Karen Morgan

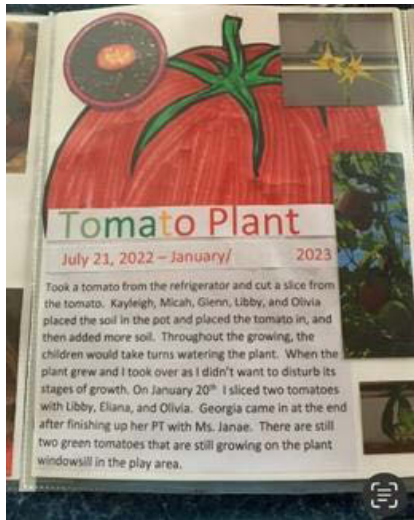
In this case, I would like to introduce **Karen Morgan childcare provider from the Family Daycare located in Monroe NY**. She joined our CHSC program and has been making improvements and adopting great ideas at her daycare. Using the CHSC funds we were able to help Karen with technical assistance, physical activity materials, and the tools for a garden.



"I'm grateful to another provider that informed me about the CHSC grant that can help providers like me to improve by working forward to helping the provider to help the children in why physically and eating healthy foods help in succeeding through their lives. Karen Morgan"

Outcome/Impact

Karen wanted to expand their learning by planting inside the house and placing it in the play area where they do most of their playing. She focused on the 5 senses to make the children aware and see how these help in their learning. She recorded their answers throughout the process as she would bring the plant down in having conversations with them and they learned that it takes a lot longer to grow a plant inside verse one growing outside in its natural environment.



This past winter the children harvested tomatoes, and learned they were juicy. Early Spring, they picked dandelions and made shortbread cookies and dandelion honey. In May, they harvested yellow beans as children tried cooked/raw beans and kept the plant to see if it will give them a second crop. Right now, they are growing carrots, and they tried strawberries.



Harvesting dandelions



Next Steps/Sustainability Plans

Karen and her children are enjoying the summer being active having water play time and learning about their environment. She is doing a wonderful job teaching the children how beautiful the nature can be. Karen has been turning every single activity into a fun learning experience and the children love those new experiences.

To learn more about our work:

Visit: www.orangecountygov.com

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Newburgh elementary school repurposes parking lot with a bicycle garden

Project Snapshot/Summary

Orange County Departments of Planning and Health grant-funded bicycle fleet and creative streetscape mural to educate students at Horizons on the Hudson Elementary School in Newburgh, NY how to bicycle safely.

Issue

As part of a public health initiative to reduce major risk factors of obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases in high need communities in Orange County, representatives from the Orange County Planning and Health Departments are working through the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities Program to increase opportunities for physical activity.

30% of Newburgh's residents do not have access to a car, forcing reliance on walking, bicycling, transit, or expensive taxis. According to data from Institute for Traffic Safety Management and Research (ITSMR), there have been 41 reported crashes involving a bicycle and 119 reported crashes involving a pedestrian resulting in personal injury in the City of Newburgh between 2019 and 2022 (note: 2022 data is preliminary.)

21.4% of the city's residents live in poverty (census.gov) and regrettably, 45.6% of students in the district are reported as overweight or obese (2018-2019) by the New York State Department of Health Student Weight Status Category Reporting System (SWSCR).

Solution/Intervention

Though policy change and capital improvements are vital to provide safe and convenient access to walking and biking in the City, it is important to couple those efforts with safety and education, especially for young adults and elementary aged children. Programming of this type helps young minds view cycling as an independent and

equitable form of transportation, encouraging them to cycle for empowerment and as a regular physical activity.



Photo Credit: NECSD

An HOH student rides one of the fleet bikes through an intersection of the bike garden.

In 2020, while drafting the Bicycle Action Plan for City of Newburgh, which surveyed the public's top places and routes for creating a bicycle network in the City, the idea for a safe controlled environment for children to practice the rules of the road and develop confidence to navigate signs, streets, intersections, roundabouts, and crosswalks was born. The project team worked with school officials, including then-principal Rob Glowacki and Assistant Principal Karriem Rahaman-Bunce to reimagine an underutilized parking lot near the gymnasium to design and install a bicycle garden. With the help of a local engineering firm, Creighton Manning, the scaled streetscape was designed to contain several components cyclists may encounter in the real-world: a roundabout, intersections, crosswalk, and sharp turns! This streetscape was just the base layer for local artist Ed Manner and his apprentice, Trevor Cortes-Lozado, to infuse with vibrant, engaging colors and playful features. Adjacent to the bike garden are posters, designed by local

CHSC | Success Story

graphic designer, Hael V. Stewart-Fisher, outlining the basics of bicycle maintenance and a reminder about important rules of the road.

“Challenging and Creative play, combined with physical activity, contribute to children’s cognitive, social and emotional development. The Bicycle Garden is a safe learning and play space that will help HOH students move better and safer within the city and engage in active transportation, as well as encourage healthy behavior and allow for improved access to the amenities of their community.”

– Gillian Matos, Principal of Horizons-on-the-Hudson School

Outcome/Impact

In 2020, the Orange County Creating Healthy Schools and Communities funded the purchase of 30 bicycles for the Newburgh Enlarged City School District for use at the Horizons-on-Hudson Elementary School. The bicycle fleet included bicycle racks for storage, maintenance tools and equipment, mini traffic cones, and safety gear including helmets and bicycle lights. A Walk Safe, Bike Safe Elementary School Physical Education Curriculum, developed by the New York Bicycle Coalition was also provided. Through this curriculum, students learn about traffic safety rules and their rights and responsibilities as walkers, bicycle drivers and future motor vehicle operators.

“Bicycling, and all active transportation modes are beneficial to the environment, public and individual health, employment access, and a sense of community well-being and belonging. We are thrilled to partner and support this important initiative at the Horizon on the Hudson School.”

- Jessica Ridgeway, Orange County Creating Healthy Schools and Communities Program

The bicycle garden project is part of an even larger effort. The CHSC team has worked closely with the City of Newburgh via its Transportation Advisory Committee, Newburgh City Council Members, including Councilman at-large Anthony Grice, and the Planning & Development Office on many successful transportation initiatives including the

passage of complete streets legislation to encourage safer roads and pathways in the City of Newburgh.



Photo Credit: NECSD

Students cheer fellow bike riders as they pedal along the new Bike Garden at HOH Elementary School in Newburgh, NY.

Next Steps/Sustainability Plans

The Horizons-on-the-Hudson Bike Garden is reserved for HOH students. Public access may be available during scheduled events. Using a bicycle garden is fun, low-cost way to normalize bicycling for both kids and adults. It also catalyzes or adds momentum to have Newburgh invest more bicycle infrastructure: from sharrows to bike racks, to a master plan for a safe bicycle network.

To learn more about our work:

Visit:

<https://www.orangecountygov.com/1923/Community-Initiatives>

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Photo Credit: NECSD

An aerial view of the new bike garden at HOH Elementary School in Newburgh, NY.

Success Story

Drumming for Fitness: A Cardio Workout for Students and Staff

Project Snapshot

The Rockland County Department of Health is working with the Haverstraw Stony Point Central School District (aka North Rockland CSD) to implement a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP) as part of the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities grant. A CSPAP has five components including physical education, before and after school programs, physical activity during school such as for brain energizers and recess, staff involvement, and family involvement.

In Year 2, (June 1, 2022 – May 31, 2023) we focused on building the physical education program in the six K-6 grade elementary schools. With input from the physical education teachers, the district purchased cardio drum kits to share. A cardio drums kit consists of exercise balls, a ball stabilizer, and drumming sticks. Participants practice a sequence of drumbeats and movements guided by the instructor and often to music.

Background

Drumming for Fitness is a cardiovascular workout program. It combines music and rhythm with elements of dance and exercise principles, providing numerous health benefits. Some of the benefits of cardio drumming include:

- Improving cardiovascular health
- Lowering blood pressure
- Reducing stress and anxiety



Drumming for Fitness at Stony Point Elementary School, Stony Point, NY

- Increasing strength and endurance
- Strengthening the immune system
- Improving coordination

Cardio drumming is a low-impact workout that people of all ages and fitness levels can do. It can also be modified for people with special needs. Cardio drumming helps improve motor skills and eye-hand coordination in addition to being a fun way to get a good workout. In schools, Drumming for Fitness is also a great cross curriculum activity that combines physical education with music allowing collaboration among those teachers.

*“... the kids love it! Thanks for getting these
for our school!”- PE teacher*

Impact

The school district purchased three sets of 25 drumming kits for approximately \$5,133. The drums were introduced to the K-3 grade students through their physical education (PE) classes. The PE teachers taught students rhythm and movement routines from online videos as well as by using their own creativity. The sets were then shared with the 4-6 grade schools for use in their PE programs. In some schools, the teachers also joined their students during PE class and at least one school offered drumming for teachers during a staff meeting.

The social-emotional benefits of Drumming for Fitness were evident from reports from teachers that their students showed increased engagement and motivation in school as well as reduced symptoms of stress. Approximately 2,500 elementary students benefited from increased cardiovascular activity during the school day.

Sustainability Plans

The school district plans to develop the Drumming for Fitness program across curricula and in extracurricular programming. In the coming school year, elementary schools will promote collaboration between the physical education and the music departments to enhance cross-curricular teaching. Additionally, the program will be used to form drumming clubs and be included in school events. There is even discussion about using cardio-drumming as part of community events to foster family-student engagement and community wellness.

To learn more about our work:

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Success Story

Seneca County Puts a Fun Spin on Health and Wellness

When physical activity and healthy nutrition combine, we have a recipe for a healthier Seneca County.

Seneca County Health Department (SCHD) and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) are promoting healthy eating and being physically active with funding through the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) grant. They recently purchased a blender bike to bring to schools and community events for people to blend healthy smoothies through pedal power. What better way to consider eating healthy and getting more exercise than by pedaling up some healthy smoothies with a blender bike?!

Together, we can and will improve the overall health of County residents.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends consuming 4-5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day and getting 30 minutes of exercise daily. However, a recent survey showed that nearly one out of every five Seneca County residents do not eat even one serving of fruits or vegetables daily. Seneca County residents need to consume more servings of fruits and vegetables and move more for optimal health. Seneca County also has a high rate of obesity, with almost 25% of the County's children meeting the federal obesity definition, which can lead to chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

Students, teachers, and parents are drawn to the blender bike.

The Seneca County Blender Bike was customized with CHSC, SCHD, and CCE logos, along with health icons. It made its debut at Elizabeth Cady

Stanton Elementary School for its LEAD (Learn Explore and Discover) Family Night. Students and families lined up in the gym to take a turn blending a healthy smoothie sample on the bike.



Blender bike makes its debut at the Cady Stanton LEAD Family Night.

Romulus School District also utilized the blender bike for their annual Makerspace family night, which also included a hands-on experiment. Students created fruit and vegetable batteries and learned how food contains energy. Copper and zinc electrodes with wire connectors were used to create circuits out of potatoes and lemons to light up small LED lights and clocks. Participants tested what produce provided more power. Interested in conducting the experiment at home or with your group? Visit stemgeneration.org for project directions or purchase a fruit battery kit online.

“It’s great to not only see the kids really engaged but also having fun! Plus, who doesn’t love a fresh treat after pedaling?!” said a teacher who is also a parent during the Romulus Makerspace Night

Putting nutrition in the spotlight is the key ingredient.

The blender bike is being frequently requested for school and community events. It is a great way to promote the goals of the CHSC grant to improve nutrition and physical activity in schools and communities. Currently, the blender bike has been requested for many additional events including end-of-year fun days at multiple school buildings; Farm 2 School and Agriculture classes; at Celebrate Commemorate in the CCE tent; various farmer’s markets; and community events; and during summer recreation programs. The goal is to make physical activity and healthy eating appealing and fun.

The blender bike provides an opportunity to exercise through pedaling while at the same time blending up a healthy smoothie made with locally produced yogurt, fruits, and even vegetables. The blender bike is eye catching and people are drawn to the novelty of it. However, it isn’t just for fun. CCE and Health Department staff share healthy smoothie recipes, healthy eating tips, and dietary and exercise recommendations. The CHSC grant aims to promote nutrition and an active lifestyle for all Seneca County residents.

County residents go the distance.

The Seneca County Health Department has identified food insecurity and obesity as target areas for the Community Health Improvement Plan based on recent health data. CCE and the SCHD will continue to make the blender bike available to schools and community events. Plans also include equipping the blender bike with an odometer to log how many “miles” it covers throughout Seneca County.



Waterloo Day at Waterloo High School has students blending up healthy snacks.

For more information, please contact:

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Success Story

Getting to Our Roots in Rural Schools

Project Summary

As part of the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) Grant, the Seneca County Health Department and Seneca County Cornell Cooperative Extension (SCCCE) work with Seneca County schools to help them develop nutrition education opportunities for students. Seneca Falls Central School District, which participates with CHSC and Farm2School programming, has jumped in to bring quality opportunities to their students.

Issue

Based on 2018 data collection Seneca County has selected two focus areas on which to anchor their 2022-2024 Community Health Improvement Plan, healthy eating and food security being one. Results of the 2018 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) showed that close to one third of adults and almost one quarter of children in Seneca County are obese.

Obesity is a major indicator of food insecurity as products like sugary drinks and those with poor nutritional content tend to be more affordable options for families than milk and nutrient dense foods. Data from the 2021 Feeding America Map the Gap report show that food insecurity affected 12% of Seneca County residents, and 17% of Seneca County children. Food pantry data from FoodLink also shows that an increased number of households were served in 2021 compared to 2022, indicating that access to food is still a pressing issue in Seneca County.

Solution

Seneca Falls Central School District (SFCSD) has developed a nutrition education program that includes Farm2School staff, Health and Family Consumer Science educators, and district wellness

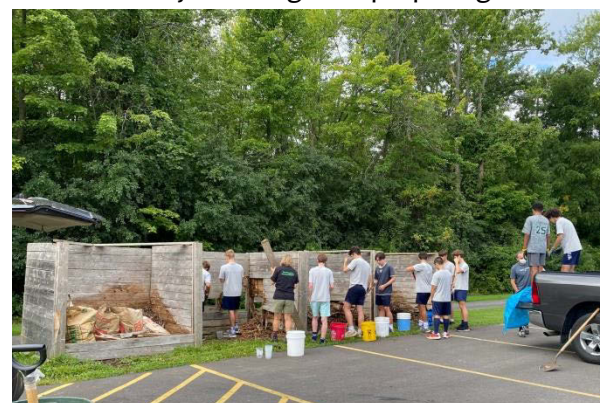


Volunteers work on building raised garden beds at Mynderse Academy.

champions to provide new opportunities to students.

In July, SFCSD started developing their programs by hosting a community build day that brought together volunteers to build their outdoor raised garden beds using CHSC funds to purchase the lumber and supplies. CCE staff and even local assemblyman Jeff Gallahan were on site to assist with the building and share information about Farm2School and CHSC.

Then, in August, the boys soccer program volunteered by assisting with preparing the



Seneca Falls Boys' Soccer program helps fill garden beds with compost and repair compost bins.

CHSC | Success Story

garden beds for planting by moving and filling them with compost. Seneca Green Composting Club has been a project through the school cafeterias since 2014. Repairs were also done to replace broken or rotting walls of the compost container.

“Students see the Tower Gardens in the media center and it catches their interest. They are curious and we allow taste testing of what is growing. It gets them thinking about what else could be grown in the towers,” says Amanda Fleig, CHSC school liaison for SFCSD.

As the school year was about to begin Amanda Fleig, CHSC school liaison for SFCSD, and Lindsay Wilson, SFCSD teacher, prepared the district's tower gardens by planting a variety of lettuces and herbs to be grown inside. The produce has since been a huge hit with both students and faculty, as students have been able to sample unfamiliar items, staff have used lettuces for fresh salads and on their sandwiches at lunch, and students participated in a food lab to make Chicken Caesar salad with lettuce grown in the tower gardens.

Outcome

Due to the success of the initial steps of the program the district is looking to continue to expand their nutrition education and gardening. The Seneca Falls Rotary has donated a tower garden to the middle school, which holds some strawberry and tomato plants, among others. More CHSC funds are also being allocated to purchase 2 additional grow towers and seeds to grow a greater variety of produce in the future.

Next Steps

Seneca Falls Central School District is also exploring additional ways to share their produce with a larger audience utilizing the cafeteria and with a partnership with a local business, Fall Street Brewing, which will be utilizing some

lettuce on sandwiches served at their establishment.

The raised garden beds will have garlic planted this fall and broccoli, carrots, potatoes, beans, pumpkins, and flowers next spring. The plan is to share the veggies with our school community first and then offer extras to the Seneca Falls community. Plans are also underway to further develop the space to include an outdoor classroom with picnic tables and umbrellas for teachers to hold instruction and labs monitoring plant growth and hold taste testing.



Students harvest lettuce from a tower garden during a food lab to create chicken Caesar salad.

For more information, please contact:

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EDUCATING THE EDUCATORS

An afternoon of fun and learning!

St. Peter's Health Partners (SPHP), in collaboration with Capital Roots, is working with eight school districts to reduce childhood obesity through increasing physical activity, promoting healthful eating, and creating environments that support healthy foods and physical activity. The program is supported through Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC), a NYS Department of Health-funded grant.

The eight school districts include: Mechanicville, Cohoes, Watervliet, Albany, Amsterdam, Troy, Schenectady and Rensselaer.

Over time, we've come to fully appreciate the considerable health benefits of indoor physical activity – even in small doses and in small spaces!



To learn more about our work, visit:

www.healthprograms.org

**Email: Leanna.Komoroske@sphp.com OR
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Background

The obesity epidemic affects nearly 20% of America's children and adolescents. And yet, since the mid-2000s, recess is on the decline, with 1 in 4 elementary schools no longer providing recess to all grade levels. In fact, only eight states nationwide require elementary schools to provide daily recess.

Unfortunately, New York is not one of them.

Students spend 6 hours a day in school, so opportunities to be physically active while in school are important. Physical activity throughout the day has been shown to promote healthy brain development, increase cognition, and decrease feelings of anxiety and depression.

At SPHP, we know that teachers change lives for the better. That's why we are firmly committed to helping them succeed.

A Resource Fair is Born

To explore new approaches to enhancing indoor physical activity through creative learning environments, SPHP provided a learning opportunity for educators. In fact, why not offer educational staff an opportunity to unwind after a busy school day, eat some delicious food, and learn new ways to help their students succeed in school... and in life? Indeed, why not?

In the Spring of 2023, SPHP hosted an afterschool physical activities Resource Fair for personnel working in school districts throughout the greater Capital Region. Nineteen educators representing seven different schools attended the event in Latham, NY.

In addition to offering information and demonstrations of dynamic new resources, the gathering featured two spirited trainings:

- o Math and Movement, a kinesthetic, multisensory approach to teaching math that incorporates physical exercise, stretching and cross-body movements
- o Breathe for Change, a training in mindfulness, social-emotional learning, and yoga

The Resource Fair gave educators the opportunity to informally network with vendors, colleagues from other school districts, and members of the SPHP team. Educators could dialogue with vendors regarding specific physical activity issues in their schools, helping them to understand how best to apply the training tools.



"Tools need to be tailored to the specific needs of each school," said Erin Sinisgalli, Director of St. Peter's Health Partners Community Health Programs

Outcome/Impact

Educators in attendance said they appreciated the Resource Fair as their school districts have fewer resources but many high-needs students, a result of chronic health challenges, poor nutrition, and environmental stress.

Educators who were unfamiliar with the CHSC initiative were also able to learn how CHSC can support them and their schools, learn the importance of wellness policies, and how best to implement them.

Next Steps/Sustainability Plans

Attendees at the Resource Fair completed an evaluation tool that included, among other things, which resources would be most beneficial for their students. This information will help us in our follow up discussions, especially as we seek to better understand the unique needs of each school.

Further, the event fostered a stronger sense of collaboration with schools that had previously been less inclined to partner with the CHSC program. By seeing, learning, and deciding what new resources would best meet the needs of their students, the educators came away with increased enthusiasm and commitment to our program.

In addition, by giving educators the autonomy of experiencing the resources firsthand, we observed an increase in confidence and engagement to implement the resources in their classrooms.

We fully intend to keep that enthusiasm alive and growing.

*Mini
Success Stories*
2022-2023

Our CHSC team offers extensive experience in helping school districts tailor educational programs to meet the diverse needs of their students. This year, for instance, we assisted:

Rensselaer City School District by providing a portable low-ropes course, along with professional development training.

Troy City School District with the addition of physical activity equipment (recumbent stationary bikes, heavy weight boxing bags and equipment) for the high school wellness center.

Cohoes Middle School with a "Healthy Smoothie Taste Test" event where students (with the assistance of school cafeteria staff) make their own smoothies and learn about healthy nutrition choices.





Success Story

Supporting Food Access Programs in St. Lawrence County

The St. Lawrence Health Initiative's Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) grant supports the more than 60 food access programs located in the county. Grant work includes assisting food access programs with adopting Healthy Food Procurement Policies to ensure nutritious foods are available to clients; and administration of the St. Lawrence Food Access Program Alliance to provide professional development and networking opportunities for food access program staff and volunteers.

Healthy Food Procurement Policies

Healthy Food Procurement Policies at food access programs such as food pantries and community meal sites, ensure there is a selection of healthy foods available to those in need. A policy encourages purchasing of nutritionally-sound food and discourages stocking of less healthy food. A policy helps fill pantry shelves with the best food a limited program budget can afford. And because policies are board-approved, best practices are put into daily action by all staff and volunteers. In support of a Healthy Food Procurement Policy,

"When a new volunteer offers to shop for the pantry, I have them read our policy and discuss it with me. Our policy informs the purchaser of our goals and values, and about nutrition in general. The policy impacts our purchasing decisions because we aim to provide our clients with fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, and other low and unprocessed foods, as well as items with no added sugar, and lower in sodium. Despite the low cost of ready-to-heat noodle dishes stereotypical of college student diets, our pantry instead offers ingredients so people can, with little kitchen equipment, make their own dishes. We do offer grab-and-go options as well as microwave meals, understanding the needs of the college population. When we do offer these, we try to stock options with less sugar and salt."

- SUNY Potsdam Food Pantry



Photo Credit: Karen Bage

Canton Neighborhood Center's new cart helps bring pantry deliveries in as well as take food out to clients' vehicles.

- St. Lawrence County Community Development Program

"Having a Healthy Food Procurement Policy keeps our six Neighborhood Centers aligned. By revising and renewing our Policy, existing staff were reminded, and new staff were trained about the importance of stocking healthy food and brought the practice to the forefront of our daily operations."

"We requested a refrigerator/ freezer since we were running out of space to store fresh and frozen food. We use it for our food pantry, our Senior Squad food delivery program, and for our community meals. The equipment was a HUGE help!"

- Tri-Town Food Pantry

CHSC grant funds can be used to purchase items such as shelving, refrigerators, freezers, stainless steel tables, carts, racks, and produce displays to help programs store and deliver healthy food.

St. Lawrence Food Access Program Alliance

The St. Lawrence Food Access Program Alliance was formed by the Health Initiative's Community Coordinator during the first round of CHSC funding to support the professional development needs of food access program personnel – both paid staff and volunteers. Alliance meetings are held quarterly at different program sites where the host's program is featured, updates from Food Bank of Central New

York (whose staff travel over two hours to attend) are presented, followed by time for sharing of successes, struggles, and networking. The Alliance email list has grown to over 120 names representing

"I'm not from the north country, so when I took over the pantry, I wasn't aware of the programs and resources available. Thank goodness for the Alliance! If I have a community member ask about a program, I know exactly who to call. The meetings are great sounding boards to ask if what you have going on at your program is something that may be going on elsewhere. I really look forward to the Alliance meetings and try very hard not to miss them."

- Tri-Town Food Pantry

more than 60 food access programs in the county. Attendance at the meetings typically tops 30 people, with many community support agencies now amongst the mix. Programs such as public transportation, addiction support agencies, and senior services also attend Alliance meetings to share their

resources and client needs. The Alliance has become a vital link for food access programs and support agencies to stay connected - all in the effort to bring healthy food to those in need.

"I find the meetings very useful. My background is not in food or nutrition, but I was asked to run the food pantry as a service to the university. When I attend these meetings, it's easier for me to place myself within the group of people who really are experts at feeding their communities. I love getting to network with other community leaders and share struggles, ideas, and triumphs."

- SUNY Potsdam Food Pantry

"Alliance meetings are incredibly useful. Since attending, I've made connections with many organizations I didn't even know existed. Of course, there are programs I knew about, but these meetings have facilitated networking and discussion that most likely would not have happened otherwise. It's wonderful to discuss common topics with so many other food access programs simultaneously. When an organization shares its struggles, it's amazing to hear other programs brainstorm helpful ideas, or even step up and offer a possible solution. We're all in this with the same goal - to provide healthy food to people in need. Alliance meetings remind us we aren't alone in our work."

- St. Lawrence County Community Development Program



Photo Credit: Karen Bage

Potsdam's P2 Food Market, a food pantry run by high school students, hosted a spring Alliance meeting.

Potsdam high school students shared their experiences running their program while showing Alliance members the P2 Food Market. Students reflected on what it means to serve their school and community and the great reward they feel in doing so.



Photo Credit: Karen Bage

Sustainability

Work with food access programs to write and adopt Healthy Food Procurement Policies will continue throughout the remainder of CHSC grant years. As more programs adopt such policies, the practice of offering nutritious foods has become the norm - it's just what is done at food access programs in St. Lawrence County. Alliance participation is high, and meetings will continue as testimony from food access program staff and volunteers proves its need.

To learn more about our work:

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CREATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES!



NEW YORK STATE
Creating Healthy Schools
and Communities



Brentwood School District Teacher Wellness Initiatives

Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC)

is a New York State Department of Health grant dedicated to supporting schools and community sites in increasing access to healthy, affordable foods and physical activity opportunities.

Teachers and staff in the Brentwood School District take action to support their health and wellness for their own benefit, as well as to inspire their students!

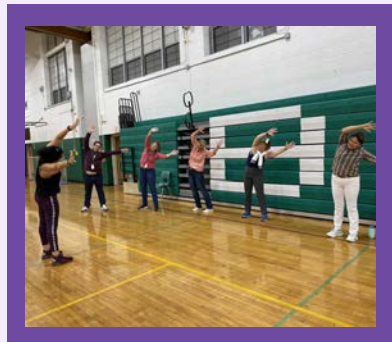


Brentwood High School Monday Mile

- Wellness Champion and Physical Education Teacher Suzy Goumba leads the "Monday Mile"
- Staff gather before the school day to walk a mile around the building, stretch, and engage in basic body weight exercises

Northeast Elementary School Wellness Wednesday

- The Northeast Elementary School Wellness Committee hosts Wellness Wednesdays
 - Teachers follow a mile-long walk-in-place guided video before the school day
 - Staff occasionally receive healthy snacks or wellness items such as lavender and stress balls



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CREATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES!



NEW YORK STATE Creating Healthy Schools and Communities

Family Service League examines vending machine products available to guests

Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC)

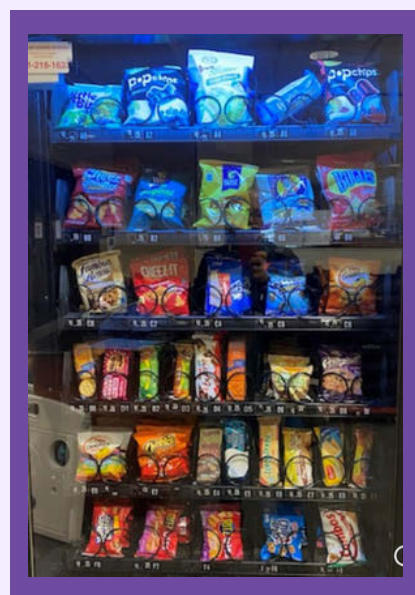
is a New York State Department of Health grant dedicated to supporting schools and community sites in increasing access to healthy, affordable foods and physical activity opportunities.

Vending Machines Matter

- Upon closer examination, one realizes that healthy and more nutritious options are sparse.
- A survey was conducted among residents and staff to identify snack and beverage preferences in order to better meet their needs of convenience and nourishment at the vending machine.
- This effort reinforces a larger message of health promotion led by FSL administrators with support from CHSC.

Healthier Choices for All!

- 60 % of residents responded to the survey.
- 50 % of respondents purchase 1-3 times a week.
- 76.1 % would increase purchases if vending machine options changed.
- Taste and price were found to be more important than healthiness, carbs, salt, fat and calories.
- Most important "health factors" were salt, perception of healthiness and calories.
- FSL administrators and vendor are exploring healthier options.



Vending Survey

In an effort to support the health and wellness of students, staff and visitors, Family Service League is considering adding healthier options to the vending machines. Please fill out this quick survey to provide feedback!

- Are you a...
 - ☐ Student
 - ☐ Staff Member
 - ☐ Visitor
- How many times per week do you buy food and/or beverages from vending machines at SCC?
 - ☐ Never
 - ☐ 1-3 times a week
 - ☐ 4-6 times a week
 - ☐ 7+ times a week
- What do you consider when purchasing a food/beverage at the vending machine?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Taste			
Price			
Calories			
Healthiness			
Salt/Sodium			
Carbs			
Fat			
- If vending machine options changed, would this change how often you purchase a snack/beverage from the vending machine?
 - ☐ Increase
 - ☐ Remain the same
 - ☐ Decrease





CREATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES!



Creating Healthy Schools
and Communities



Gerald J Ryan Outreach Center Champions Health & Wellness

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is a New York State Department of Health grant dedicated to supporting schools and community sites in increasing access to healthy, affordable foods and physical activity opportunities.



The Center's Impact

- Non-profit serving Wyandanch with 8 services, including a food pantry, community garden, and senior food delivery
- Over 15,000 people served annually
- Acknowledged opportunity to assist clients in living a healthier lifestyle

Accomplishments

- Implement Food Service Guidelines prioritizing nutritious & culturally relevant foods
- CHSC-funded refrigerator to store and promote fresh, healthy foods
- Informational posters shared to encourage clients to engage in healthy behaviors





CREATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES!



Creating Healthy Schools
and Communities



Math & Movement at MLK Elementary

Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC)

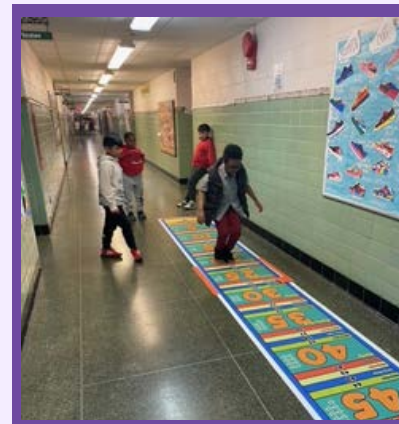
is a New York State Department of Health grant dedicated to supporting schools and community sites in increasing access to healthy, affordable foods and physical activity opportunities.

Wyandanch & CHSC

- Wyandanch School District & CHSC have collaborated for 8 years to support health & wellness through activities such as...
 - 12 Gifts of Fitmas
 - School Garden Programs
 - Food Tastings
 - Walking Clubs
 - Yoga 4 Classrooms
 - Every Kid Healthy Week

Math & Movement

- CHSC donated "Math & Movement" (M&M) mats to MLK Elementary School to encourage physical activity (PA) in class, as well as learning during gym and recess.
- M&M combines teaching basic math concepts, such as fractions and multiplication tables, while engaging in PA.
- M&M has been enjoyed by students during Every Kid Health Week and on Fun Fridays!



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CREATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES!



Creating Healthy Schools and Communities



Opening Word's Recipe For A Healthier Community

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is a New York State Department of Health grant dedicated to supporting schools and community sites in increasing access to healthy, affordable foods and physical activity opportunities.

Why Opening Word?

- A literacy, English learning, and job readiness program for women from around the world
- Food is a common language that allows students to share recipes from home and discover the foods of others
- Opening Word partnered with CHSC to adopt food service guidelines, and promote health and wellness

Recipe Card Program

- CHSC provided pantry-friendly healthy recipe cards for the students
- Opening Word purchased the culturally appealing ingredients and put together bags with the recipe cards
- Students were happy to receive nutrition tips, recipes and ingredients

"CHSC allows our students to explore and access healthy foods, as they nurture their bodies and minds"
- Director, Gillan Kessinger



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CREATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES!



Pronto: a model organization for health and wellness

Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) is a New York State Department of Health grant dedicated to supporting schools and community sites in increasing access to healthy, affordable foods and physical activity opportunities.

Pronto Long Island

- A Community Outreach Center with a food bank, thrift center, ESL, citizenship and computer classes, immunization for uninsured children, food stamp, Medicare and Healthfirst Insurance assistance, senior services, a community garden, summer programs for kids, and much more!
- Pronto is committed to not only serving its community members but also having a positive impact on their health and wellness.

A Healthier Community

- Pronto is providing its visitors with gardening, nutrition and self care programs.
- CHSC is providing healthy eating tip sheets and recipe cards to encourage neighbors to make small changes to live healthier.
- Food Service Guidelines were adopted to prioritize healthy and culturally relevant foods.
- CHSC is creating an informational banner (English and Spanish) to complement these programs and motivate neighbors to engage in healthier behaviors.



HEALTHY EATING TIPS

Pronto is dedicated to supporting your wellbeing by encouraging healthy eating, which can lower your risk of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. We are taking measures to increase healthy foods available in our pantry while providing nutrition and health classes, as well as physical activity events.

WHOLE VS. PROCESSED FOODS

Whole foods are those in their natural state when they have the greatest health benefit, such as fresh fruit, nuts, milk, eggs, and meats. Processed foods, such as frozen meals and fast foods, contain preservatives that reduce nutrients and health. Try choosing whole foods before processed foods!



CANNED GOODS

For healthier canned goods try...

- Rinsing contents with water to rinse off 40% of sodium and preservatives
- Choosing "low" or "reduced" sodium and "low fat" options
- Picking foods packaged in water or 100% natural juice

HEALTHY BEVERAGES

Did you know one bottle of soda, juice, and other sugary drinks can contain over 2 days of recommended sugar intake? Drinking water instead can improve digestion, brain function, energy levels, and skin. Flavored seltzer water, 100% fruit juices, low fat milk, and low sugar soda are healthy beverage options.





Resurrection House: Planting Seeds for Success



Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC)

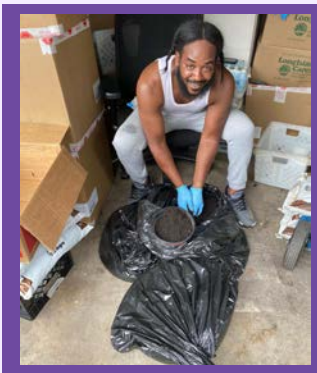
is a New York State Department of Health grant dedicated to supporting schools and community sites in increasing access to healthy, affordable foods and physical activity opportunities.

Past Success

- Resurrection House is a men's shelter that provides safe, nurturing and empowering environments where residents can achieve self-sufficiency and take steps towards permanent housing.
- CHSC started working with Resurrection House last fall when small wellness changes were implemented; filtered water to increase hydration and wellness newsletters and calendars have been distributed to increase healthy behaviors.

Planting New Seeds

- CHSC's next steps included providing guidance and assistance to the residents to create a vegetable and herb garden. The men do a lot of cooking at the house.
- Island Harvest's farm coordinator Cassidy, supplied Resurrection House with hearty compost, soil, containers and seedlings.
- The staff and residents then built raised beds and transplanted their growing seedlings. "Residents enjoyed caring daily for the garden and were the main recipients of the harvested veggies. Next spring they hope to expand it," according to Director, Carolann Johns.





Resurrection House Inspires Health and Wellness

Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC)

is a New York State Department of Health initiative dedicated to supporting schools and community sites in increasing access to affordable, nourishing foods and physical activity opportunities.

Why Resurrection House?

- An emergency shelter for single men, providing short term housing, case management and supportive services
- Manage 13 transitional apartments for families, offering case management and supportive services
- Provide safe, nurturing and empowering environments where residents can achieve self-sufficiency & permanent housing

Accomplishments

- Food Service Guidelines were adopted Feb 2023.
- A newly installed water filter in the kitchen faucet encourages consumption of water.
- Monthly CHSC wellness calendars, newsletters, and signs are shared and displayed to encourage more regular physical activity (PA).
- Next Steps: CHSC to support plans for new garden in 2023



New Water Filter



Monthly Wellness Calendar

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The Wellness Champions of Roosevelt

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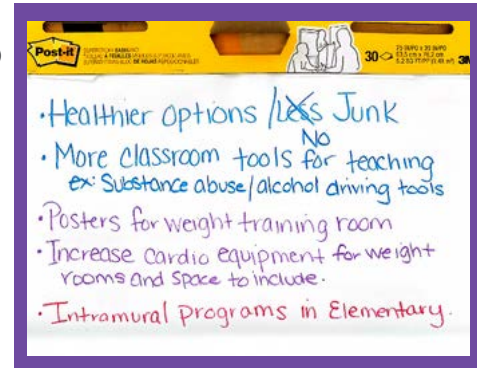


Roosevelt Schools and CHSC

- Roosevelt School District and CHSC have collaborated for several years to support Health and Wellness.
- Past activities included:
 - *School Garden Programs
 - *Food Tastings
 - *Walking Clubs
 - *Yoga 4 Classrooms
 - *Math & Movement
 - *Wellness Committee meetings

A District Committed to Wellness

- Roosevelt's Athletic director, Eamonn Flood, recently gathered the Health and Physical Education teachers together to attend a Wellness Professional Development session led by CHSC.
- Teachers engaged in fun and energizing brain breaks, Math & Movement and Yoga 4 Classrooms activities that they can implement in their buildings.



"It was a blast brainstorming with my colleagues to see how we can implement new wellness initiatives in our schools"

-Eamonn. Flood, Athletic Director





CREATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES!



Creating Healthy Schools
and Communities



Wyandanch Warriors Take on "12 Gifts of Fitmas" Challenge

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physical activity opportunities.



Wyandanch Wellness Warriors

- Before COVID-19 interruptions, CHSC and Wyandanch High School's Kappa League promoted physical activity (PA) through "12 Gifts of Fitmas"
- The initiative involved a Kappa member leading the school through a PA exercise during morning announcements for 12 days leading up to the holiday break

"12 Gifts of Fitmas" Revival

- In December 2022, CHSC revived "12 Gifts" with the Leaders of the Future club
- The Leaders assisted in deciding the chair yoga and body weight exercises to be announced each day
 - The initiative engaged the whole school, and many said it supported their personal fitness and wellness journeys

